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Abstract

The Development of a Manual of Study about the Lord's Supper for Children in the Free Methodist Church

by

Neale Earle Robb

The Free Methodist Church permits children to participate in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper but has no instructional material to teach children about Communion. This dissertation set forth to develop and evaluate curriculum for teaching children the purpose, meaning, and practice of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The study evaluated ministry to children on the basis of the Wesleyan quadrilateral, reviewed Free Methodist theology of the Lord's Supper, examined the practices of other denominations with regard to children and Communion, and analyzed how children learn.

The research demonstrates that children should be included in the worshipping life of the congregation. Children think concretely so that the use story and symbols to elicit worship and imagination are important in the development of faith. The Lord's Supper is an object lesson instituted by our Lord to remind us of his sacrificial death on Calvary, his abiding presence with the believer and our eternal hope. This Communion curriculum combines storytelling, the use of objects, wondering questions, play, drama, and music to bring abstract doctrine to life for children.

A study of the curriculum was conducted in two Free Methodist churches. Results of the study found the curriculum to be effective. The use of story, visuals, objects, hands on activities, drama, and music captured the attention of children. These methods were effective in

making this Sacrament understandable and meaningful for the children.

Following the lessons children evidenced a greater understanding of the meaning and purpose of Communion. They demonstrated a greater reverence during the Sacrament and found it more meaningful.

Recommendations for improving the curriculum were incorporated into the Lesson Manual included in the dissertation. The result of this work is a practical and effective curriculum of five lessons for use by pastors and parents within the Free Methodist Church in teaching children about the Lord's Supper.

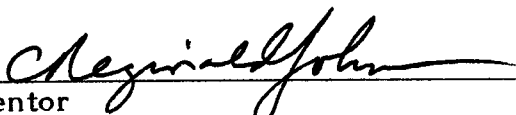
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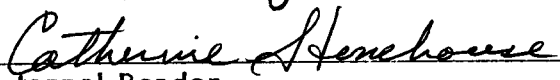
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for Children in the Free Methodist Church**

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Presented to
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**In Partial Fulfillment
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**by
Neale Earle Robb**

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- Neale Robb

CHAPTER 1

Overview of the Study

Children and Communion

Commonly Free Methodist pastors must respond to requests to serve Communion to children under the age of twelve. These requests may come from the parents or from the children themselves. Parents wonder when it is appropriate for their child to participate in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Some parents ask because their child is interested, while others tend to think children are permitted to partake too soon. Responses vary, depending on the Pastor's own views of Communion and their understanding of the position of the Free Methodist Church. The attitudes of members within the congregation also have an impact.

The question of children at the Lord's Table is not a new one. In 1979 the General Conference of the Free Methodist Church of North America affirmed a prior ruling of the Board of Bishops on the matter. The ruling stated:

We find that we may not forbid Christian parents the privilege of bringing their children with them to partake at the table of the Lord in Holy Communion.

In practice, we exhort pastors, parents, and teachers to instruct all children under their care so that there may be a degree of understanding of the Christian sacrament consistent with the age and intellectual maturity of the child. There should be careful preparation for that time when, as an accountable believer, the individual may respond to the invitation with a more mature understanding.

We also urge that proper care be taken that there shall be no irreverence in the administration of the sacrament when children are present or at any other time. (Van Valin 139)

Children within the Free Methodist Church are permitted to partake of the Lord's Supper, yet within Ontario only 25 percent of pastors

provide any instruction to children about the purpose and meaning of the Communion service apart from a children's moments talk during the worship service. Twelve percent of pastors indicated that children in their congregations receive no teaching about the meaning and purpose of the Lord's Supper (Appendix I). While parents have a responsibility to explain the sacrament to their children and determine when they would be spiritually ready to partake, the Church and, particularly, the pastor have an interest, opportunity, and responsibility to provide significant spiritual nurture for children with the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

Presently, pastors and parents receive little guidance or resources for addressing this important matter. The Pastor's Handbook informs pastors that children should be instructed regarding the meaning and proper practice of Communion. Yet no tools are available for pastors to use. Only three questions are provided to guide Pastors and parents in determining if a child should receive Communion. These questions relate to desire, salvation, and understanding. The first two questions are easily answered, but the matter of understanding is more difficult. Instruction will help children gain a clearer perception of the purpose and meaning of the Lord's Supper.

Some other denominations provide specific instruction for children or youth on this important subject. The Anglican Church of Canada has developed a curriculum to use with children. Others such as the Lutheran Church include it as a part of Confirmation classes. The Free Methodist Church needs a tool which pastors and parents can use to teach children the purpose and meaning of Communion. This dissertation proposes to fill this void.

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the proposed study was to develop and evaluate curriculum for teaching children the purpose, meaning, and practice of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The scope of this study includes a review of the Free Methodist theology of the Lord's Supper, an examination of the practices of other denominations, an analysis of how children learn, the development of curriculum, and a study of the curriculum in two Free Methodist churches. The objective of this study was to provide a practical and effective tool for use by pastors and parents within the Free Methodist Church in Canada in nurturing children regarding Communion.

Methodology

The Board of Bishops ruling infers that instruction about Communion is valuable. Since instruction is encouraged several questions deserve attention before any curriculum is developed. This study begins with the subject of ministry to children. One must not assume that ministry to children should be carried out. That premise must be supported. What guidelines does the Scripture provide concerning ministry to children? Does the Church have a responsibility to teach children? Does the Bible encourage us to teach children about the Christian life and more specifically, the sacraments? How we answer these questions determines our approach to the whole matter of children and Communion. A study of scriptural passages relating to children is the beginning point of this research. While Scripture is the key component in developing any theology of ministry to children, the other components of the Wesleyan quadrilateral--Scripture, tradition, experience, and reason--

-are used to clarify the Scriptural teaching. Following this a review of the practices of the church with regard to ministry to children and their participation in the sacrament was undertaken.

To teach children accurately we must establish what the Free Methodist Church believes about Communion. Considering Wesley's view that Communion can be a converting as well as a confirming grace, is it essential that children who participate be already saved? How much should children be required to understand about the Lord's Supper before they participate? These and other theological questions must be addressed before formulating any manual for teaching children about the Lord's Supper. Cognizance of child development and learning patterns assists in determining how much children should understand before they are permitted to participate in Communion, and the best methods for inculcating these truths into children.

This research formed the basis for the development of a curriculum or manual designed to teach children of primary and junior ages about the Lord's Supper. Once designed this material was field tested and refined to arrive at a finished product that is suitable for use by Free Methodist pastors.

Study of the Curriculum

Two churches participated in the study of this curriculum: the Caistor Centre Free Methodist Church, which I pastor, and the Dunnville Free Methodist Church, pastored by the Reverend Paul Shaw. Pre-tests and Post-tests were conducted with each group to determine the effectiveness of the teaching program. Sixteen children--nine from Caistor Centre and seven from Dunnville--participated in both the Pre-test and the Post-

test. The Pre-test and Post-test followed activity and interview formats. Children were invited to draw a picture of what was special to them about Communion. Following the picture drawing, children met individually with their respective pastor who asked them questions about their drawing and about four pictures that were used in the lessons (Appendix B).

The impact of specific instruction about the Lord's Supper on children was influenced by a number of factors beyond the control of this study. In some cases, children may have already learned much about the sacrament from their parents. In such cases there may be little noticeable growth in understanding since the Communion class served as something of a review. Some Free Methodist churches and pastors give a higher priority to the Lord's Supper than others. Children are influenced by these attitudes. Also, the degree of parental involvement with their children during the weeks of the course affected the children. The evaluation must take these factors into consideration.

Teaching children about the Lord's Supper was conducted by the pastor in a group setting. A variety of methods were employed in order to make these classes interesting and understandable for the children. Included in these methods were stories, Wordsearches, puzzles, artwork, and group activities.

Theological Considerations

This dissertation centres around two theological concerns: what we, as Free Methodists, believe about the Lord's Supper and what we believe about ministry to children. An understanding of our theology of the Lord's Supper must precede the development of a manual for use in teaching children about the Sacrament. In many cases there has been

little teaching about the Lord's Supper, even among adults. This has led to an incomplete understanding of Communion by many Free Methodists. Careful attention is given to this matter.

This project addresses the theology of our ministry to children and the ecclesiology of the Free Methodist Church in relation to children. If children are legitimately part of the worshipping community, and if they may make a conscious choice to follow Christ, then should they not be included fully in the worship life of the congregation? Officially, the Free Methodist Church welcomes children to the Lord's Supper. It does direct pastors, teachers, and parents to insure that they are adequately instructed so as to understand the meaning of the Lord's Supper. Yet there are no specific tools provided for the instruction of children in this very important subject. Does this not suggest that there is a gap between policy and ministry? The manual developed through this project proposes to fill this gap in one important area--the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

Overview of the Study

Chapter 2 of this study provides the results of the research upon which the curriculum for this course on the Lord's Supper is founded. The "why" question is the first to be tackled in this research. Why bother teaching children about Communion? Is it necessary? Support for a children's ministry is evaluated on the basis of the Wesleyan quadrilateral--Scripture, tradition, experience, and reason. Does the Bible encourage us to teach children about the Christian life and, by inference, about the sacraments? History bears out that children were participants in the Sacrament in the early centuries of the church, but gradually the

practice was eliminated. Experience has taught us that the church must minister to its children. Many children have placed their faith in Jesus Christ.

After establishing the value of teaching children about the Lord's Supper, the doctrinal position of the Free Methodist Church on the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is discussed. This examination reflects on the practices and beliefs of Wesley and those of present day Free Methodists. Free Methodists have generally followed Wesley in the stated doctrine about the Lord's Supper, but we have diverged considerably from the practice he encouraged. We will discover that many Free Methodists either do not agree with their own doctrinal statement or fail to fully understand it. This fact suggests we need better teaching on this subject.

Once we have established the value of teaching children and the doctrine that needs teaching, we examine child development. An understanding of how children develop and learn enables us to design an effective manual to use in teaching children about the Lord's Supper.

Finally, the second chapter examines the practices of some other denominations. This helps us understand how our paedocommunion practices compare with those of other churches. Teaching materials from other churches may assist in the development of our own.

Chapter 3 provides the framework for the study of the curriculum that was used to evaluate and refine the curriculum on the Lord's Supper. In this chapter we detail the nature of the study, describe the participants, and outline the evaluative tools.

The findings of the study are reported in Chapter 4. These findings demonstrate the validity of a course for children about the Lord's Supper. The reader learns what parts of the course were effective and useful and those that were not.

Chapter 5 delineates the conclusions derived from the study of the curriculum. Alterations in the course material are described. Finally, recommendations will be made concerning the implementation of such a program of study within the Free Methodist Church in Canada.

CHAPTER 2

Review of the Literature

Ministry to ChildrenThe Theological Rationale - What does the Scripture Say?

When considering the matter of administering the sacrament of the Lord's Supper to children, the first foundation stone must be that of Scripture. We must determine what the Bible declares regarding ministry to children in general and participation in the Lord's Supper in particular. If God's Word instructs us to serve Communion to teens and adults only, then it is clear that we must leave the matter for a later age. However, if the Word of God advocates ministry to children, then let us pour our energies into the task.

Ministry to Children. Noah offered God a sacrifice of thanksgiving following the flood. God was pleased with his sacrifice and promised never again to destroy the world with a flood. God made this promise in spite of the fact that he knew sin was not eradicated but "*every inclination of his heart is evil from childhood*" (Genesis 8:21). A child is "*a sinner from birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me*" (Psalm 51:5). Since this is true everyone needs to be instructed in the way of the Lord. Such was the problem of sin that God chose Abraham "*so that he will direct his children and his household after him to keep the way of the LORD*" (Genesis 18:19). At the outset then, the Lord gave to parents the awesome responsibility of teaching their children to follow the Lord.

As Moses gave his parting address and charge to the people of Israel, he instructs them about the propagation of the law from one generation to another. "*Only be careful, and watch yourselves closely so*

that you do not forget the things your eyes have seen or let them slip from your heart as long as you live. Teach them to your children and to their children after them" (Deuteronomy 4:9). *"Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up"* (Deuteronomy 6:7). *"Their children, who do not know this law, must hear it and learn to fear the LORD your God"* (Deuteronomy 31:13). *"Take to heart all the words I have solemnly declared to you this day, so that you may command your children to obey carefully all the words of this law"* (Deuteronomy 32:46). Through Moses God stressed the necessity for instruction of the children. This instruction was primarily the responsibility of the parents who were urged to use every opportunity or circumstance of life to teach their children about living for the Lord. Memorials, festivals, and ceremonies were instituted to remind the Israelites of what God had done for them, and as a teaching tool so that children would ask: *"What is the meaning of the stipulations, decrees and laws the Lord our God has commanded you"* (Deuteronomy 6:20)? At those opportune times parents were to be prepared to instruct their children. After crossing the Jordan Joshua ordered twelve stones to be taken from the river and placed at their camp as a sign that would stimulate questions in the children.

Spiritual instruction of children did not reside with parents alone. Moses' directive *"Teach them to your children and to their children after them"* includes grandparents (Deuteronomy 4:9). Their experience and wisdom should be mined for its riches. The Lord extends responsibility to the household of faith at large with these instructions: *"Assemble the people--men, women and children, and the aliens living in your towns--so*

they can listen and learn to fear the LORD your God and follow carefully all the words of this law" (Deuteronomy 31:12). The festivals, feasts, and ceremonies prescribed for Israel served as opportunities for corporate instruction and nurture. These observances included children.

Later, in the Wisdom literature, the value of training children is reaffirmed. Solomon assures parents, "*Train a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not turn from it*" (Proverbs 22:6). The early training of children is not easily forgotten. Child psychology now affirms that most opinions, attitudes, and lifestyles are formed in the early years of life (Meier 45). Discipline is an essential part of this training and would certainly include spiritual instruction.

During the reforms of Ezra and the governorship of Nehemiah children were included in the congregation of Israel. When Ezra led the Israelites in prayers of confession children were part of the crowd who gathered. They joined with the adults in confession and weeping (Ezra 10:1). After the walls had been rebuilt Nehemiah gave Ezra the responsibility of instructing the people in the Book of the Law. Ezra "*read it aloud from daybreak till noon . . . in the presence of the men, and women and others who could understand*" (Nehemiah 8:3). And children joined in the festivities at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 12:43).

The Lord desires that children be instructed in the faith. He commands it of his people. And he instituted worship practices that would serve to assist in that instruction. Festivals, sacrifices, memorials would all serve to infect a child's natural curiosity and thereby provide avenues

for instruction. The annual repetition of many of these worship practices helped to build a growing understanding.

The New Testament has little to add to the Old Testament teaching about children and spiritual instruction. But Jesus' statement, "*Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these*" (Mark 10:14), is the most forceful reason for including children in all the ministries of the Church. These words were spoken in rebuke to the disciples who felt that Jesus was too important to bother with children. It is quite possible that they believed that these children would not understand how great and important Jesus was. Jesus dispelled both notions quickly and forcefully. He implied that it was the disciples, not the children, who needed to change. The children were prepared to accept Jesus and implicitly trust him. Jesus' words served also as an encouragement to parents. He always had time for children. They were important to him. They were part of his kingdom too. Parents were encouraged to bring their children to Jesus. Should the church provide ministry to children? The Bible teaches conclusively that it should.

Participation of Children in Communion. While it is important to understand the denominational policy and practices regarding the participation of children in Communion, and while it may be helpful to learn about the position of other denominations on the matter, it is essential to follow the biblical teaching on the subject. What does the Bible say about the participation of children?

The Communion passages of the New Testament are silent regarding children.¹ Just as in the passages of baptism, there is no mention of age as a requisite for participation in the sacrament. When Jesus instituted the Sacrament on the night of his betrayal he gave this simple instruction: "*Do this in remembrance of me*" (Luke 22:19).

It was through the Apostle Paul that the Lord gave more detailed instruction concerning who should participate in the meal. In his first letter to the Corinthian Church Paul confronts the Church regarding their conduct at the meal. Apparently, for some the celebration of the Lord's Supper meant more than a token wafer and sip from the cup. Some drank so much that they became drunk and unruly. Those arriving first started right in consuming the bread and the wine without waiting for others. Consequently, those who arrived last or who were more timid would get little or nothing.

Paul insists this is wrong. Twice Paul quoted the Lord, saying, "*do this in remembrance of me*" (1 Corinthians 11:24-25). The meal was to be a memorial. By it believers were to worship Christ and meditate on the tremendous sacrifice of love through which Christ had purchased their salvation. And Paul carries this a step farther. It is a proclamation of the death of Christ for the sins of the whole world (1 Corinthians 11:26). The meal is to be a witness to unbelievers.

Therefore, Paul insists that certain conditions for partaking ensue. First, one must not come thoughtlessly. "*A man ought to examine himself*" before partaking (1 Corinthians 11:28). One must evaluate his or her

¹See Matthew 26:26-29; Mark 14:22-24; Luke 22:17-20; John 6:51-58; 1 Corinthians 10:16-22, 11:17-34.

relationship with Christ and with others. Paul probably had Jesus' words in mind: *"if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there in front of the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift"* (Matthew 5:23,24).

Secondly, there was a need for understanding. *"Anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself"* (1 Corinthians 11:29). The Apostle maintains that those who partake must understand the significance and meaning of the Communion meal. While the Eucharist is a time of praise and celebration, it is not a pointless feast. One must never forget why the meal is necessary.

This ties in closely with a third perspective--remembrance. Understanding and remembrance go together. The Lord's Supper was given to help believers remember the terrible price of their salvation and the incredible love of their Saviour. These facts must never be forgotten. Remembering and understanding these things by this simple meal can provide a wonderful source of strength to the believer in times of trial and temptation.

Nowhere does the Scripture give any age restrictions. The conditions for partaking are simple--a desire to follow Jesus and an understanding of the meaning and significance of the meal. Jesus said, *"Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them"* (Mark 10:14). The church, then, should provide children every opportunity to draw near to Christ. The Lord's Supper is a means of grace whereby we may draw near to Christ. When children have faith and understanding they should

be welcome at the Table of the Lord. Children who love Jesus should be instructed in the meaning of the Lord's Supper and welcomed at his Table. And, as with the annual feasts and sacrifices in the Old Testament, the regular eating of the Lord's Supper serves to ingrain those instructions in the minds and hearts of the children. Old Testament feasts also prompted children to raise questions about their practices and beliefs. The participation of children in the Lord's Supper will do this as well.

The Ecclesiastical Rationale - What Does Tradition Say?

Children and the Church. The early church embraced children. Within the first three centuries infant baptism became the normal practice for children of Christian parents. "The rites and practice of Christian initiation in the early Church almost always included a progression of baptism, anointing (with laying on of hands), and first communion" (Pearcy 43). Catechism classes, which developed later, demonstrate an ongoing commitment of the church to minister to children.

Other than catechism and, later, confirmation classes, specific teaching of children was done in the home and school. Of course, after Constantine made Christianity the state religion all schools taught from a Christian worldview.

It was the Sunday School movement of the eighteenth century that spawned a focus on ministry to children. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries numerous specialized children's ministries evolved. Organizations such as Child Evangelism Fellowship and the Bible Club Movement set out to evangelize and nurture children. Many denominations publish their own children's material. Several gospel publishing organizations have spent a great deal of money and time to

write material for Sunday School, children's church, midweek programs, and special events--all for the purpose of winning children to Christ and nurturing them in that faith.

The Free Methodist Church has always encouraged Sunday Schools. Great effort was made during the 1940s to develop midweek children's materials. Christian Youth Crusaders was the result, and this superb program was used extensively across the denomination. It has now been replaced by Christian Life Club in the USA and Pioneer Clubs in Canada.² In addition children's camps are a feature across the Canadian Church. The Canada Great Lakes Conference operates three week-long camps in Southwestern Ontario for children from Grades 3 through 9. The northern district of the Conference runs a week of children's camp also.

The Free Methodist Church demonstrates a belief in the importance of ministry to children through the programs it offers. Many dollars are spent annually developing, improving, and promoting these programs and materials. Training is offered. The Free Methodist tradition demonstrates that ministry to children is critical.

Children and Communion. But did the tradition of the church include children in the Lord's Supper? Although Scripture is silent on the matter it is generally assumed that in the early church children partook of the Lord's Supper. Often this is suggested because of the connection of the Eucharist with the Passover meal. Communion, which celebrated deliverance from sin and death, was instituted at the time of

²The Free Methodist Church in Canada has chosen to use the non-denominational Pioneer Club program because the names "Guides" and "Pathfinders" used in the Christian Life Club material infringed on trademarks of the Girl Guides of Canada.

the Passover. Since children participated in the Passover meal it would be natural for them to be included in the Lord's Supper.

The first specific reference to the participation of children in Communion does not occur until about A.D. 251 in the writings of Cyprian. In one place Cyprian, who was Bishop of Carthage, describes how a deacon administers the cup to a little girl. The Latin word used was *infanti*, meaning a child under the age of seven years (Luther, Volume 36, 26).

Many references to children's involvement in Communion are mentioned by fourth and fifth century writers including Bishop Innocent I of Rome and Augustine. Augustine takes Jesus' statement in John 6:53³ to include children, and even infants. They are included because "*all* are embraced in the statement, that without the body and the blood of the Son of man men cannot have life" (Anti-Pelagian Writings 25). Augustine states further,

who indeed can doubt that in the term *world* all persons are indicated who enter the world by being born? For as he says in another passage 'the children of this world beget and are begotten' (Luke 20:34). From all this it follows, that even for the life of *infants* was His flesh given, which He gave for the life of the world, and that even they will not have life if they eat not the flesh of the Son of man. (25)

Later, in writing of the importance of reconciliation, Augustine declares "this reconciliation is in the laver of regeneration and in the flesh and blood of Christ, without which not even infants can have life in themselves" (420). These writings suggest that it was common for children to take part in Communion.

³I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you.

As mentioned earlier the rites and practices of Christian initiation in the early Church did include Communion. E.C. Whitaker discovered that about 95 percent of all the early Church baptismal documents he collected conclude with Communion. And even sermons and letters on the subject of baptism end by discussing participation of the newly baptized in the Eucharist (Pearcy 43). And in the Apostolic Tradition of Hippolytus infants plainly take part in the initiation rite. The instructions direct children to answer the questions for themselves if possible and through a parent if they cannot. The Lord's Supper concludes this initiation rite (Pearcy 44).

Infant communion was the practice of the Church until the eleventh century when the Western Church dissolved the threefold initiation rite by insisting that the post-baptismal anointing or confirmation be done by the bishop. In some places outside Italy the Episcopal see was so large that an annual visit by the Bishop was impossible. As a result confirmation was sometimes omitted. Several councils urged diligence in the practice of confirmation and even threatened fines and punishments if children were not confirmed by a certain age (varying from one to seven depending on the council). In 1280 the Council of Cologne reversed the common confirmation practice of "not later than seven" to "not before seven years old." This became widespread over the next two centuries. A year later the Council of Lambeth ruled that no one could receive Communion unless they had first been confirmed (Pearcy 44-45). These two rulings effectively denied Communion to children under seven and reversed the practice of the Church until that time. The Eastern Church, however, continues the practice of paedocommunion to this day (Agenda 262).

Along with the change in the initiation rites, a new eucharistic piety developed that led to the exclusion of infants and young children from the Lord's Supper. First, infants were permitted the cup only since it was easier for them to ingest than the bread. Later the priest would dip his finger in the chalice and place it on the infant's tongue (Pearcy 46). The Fourth Lateran Council in 1215 stated that Communion should begin for children at age seven or older. This ruling came as a result of a high sacramentalism which viewed the elements as so holy that to drop or spill them would be disastrous (Agenda 262).

By the time of the Reformation the practice of paedocommunion had ceased in the Western Church. However, it should be noted that "the competence of children to commune was not seriously questioned until practical problems and a specific type of eucharistic piety made it undesirable for children to be confirmed and communicated in infancy" (Pearcy 46).

Most Reformers did not favour the participation of children as Calvin makes quite clear when he writes:

In the early Church, indeed, the Lord's Supper was frequently given to infants, as appears from Cyprian and Augustine; but the practice justly became obsolete. . . . For there as far as regards baptism, the Lord makes no selection of age, whereas he does not admit all to partake of the Supper, but confines it to those who are fit to discern the body and blood of the Lord, to examine their own conscience, to show forth the Lord's death and to understand its power. (549-550)

In general Reformers held that faith was necessary before participation in the Lord's Supper was allowed. And it appears that most did not believe that true faith and understanding was possible until twelve to fourteen years of age or older.

This belief has held throughout the years until the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The Sunday School movement influenced the theology of ministry to children. Now evangelical churches do endeavour to win children to Christ. Though many churches still do not permit children to participate in Communion until they have reached the young teen years and have had some instruction, this appears to be changing. The movement throughout the church seems to be toward offering Communion to children (see the section on Other Denominations and Paedocommunion). And it is evident that the Scripture and early history of the Church do not lend support to any age restriction.

The Sociological Rationale – What Does Experience Say?

Scripture and tradition reveal that ministry to children is important. The Church has a responsibility to evangelize and nurture children. Jesus emphasized the worth of children, urging his people to do nothing to hinder their search for the Truth. By inference, then, the church must pursue ministry to children with diligence. History reveals that since the birth of the Sunday School movement children's ministries have gained increasing focus. With both Scripture and tradition supporting ministry to children in general and the place of children at the Lord's Supper specifically, we must now look at experience. Does the experience suggest that spending countless time, energy, and money to evangelize, teach, and nurture children is worthwhile? Does experience show that allowing children to participate in Holy Communion is helpful? It is to these concerns we now turn our attention.

Ministry to Children. At Caistor Centre six children received Christ as their Saviour during the first six months of 1993. Four made their

decision to follow Jesus through a Vacation Bible School, one responded during Sunday School class, and another accepted Christ at home. All these commitments came without emotional pressure or arm twisting. None were tricked or coerced by peer pressure. Sarah who received Christ at Sunday School talked to her teacher after class. At Vacation Bible School children who wished to accept Christ as their personal Saviour were invited to remain after the Bible story. Even a two year old expressed a desire to follow Jesus and prayed in her own home. She now says "Jesus in my heart". Her understanding and knowledge is very limited, but she knows Jesus loves her and she loves Jesus. Some adults are inclined to be sceptical of such commitments, but for these children they are real. These seeds of faith that have sprouted need cultivating and nurturing. Those who tend to be sceptical about the faith of children may be the ones Jesus was thinking of when he said, "*anyone who will not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will never enter it*" (Mark 10:15). Could it be that they do not understand what the faith of a child is? Could it be that those who do not believe young children can receive Christ by faith are trying to force an adult type of faith upon children?

Perhaps our penchant for testimonies of dramatic deliverances from addictive and ruinous lifestyles has skewed our practical soteriology. During my teenage and early adult years I thought I didn't have much of a testimony because I had always been a rather good and religious person. Finally, I realized that God's grace to keep me from a life of sin was just as powerful as God's grace to deliver someone else from drugs and crime. Unintentionally some have given children and youth the idea that one must go out and commit some "obvious" sins so that one can

repent and be saved. This, in turn, tends to make people doubt the validity of a child's faith, since he or she has not committed any grievous sins. This is not reasonable or Scriptural nor does it agree with the experience of many who trusted Christ as children.

And we must remember that nowhere does the Bible teach that we must name the day or the hour of our commitment to Christ. Many, such as the Philippian jailer, John Wesley, and J.A. Robb can point to specific dates when they believed in the Lord Jesus Christ and were saved. But for others, including many children of Christian parents, there is no memory of a precise spiritual birthday. They cannot remember a time when they did not believe. Jesus said, "by their fruit you will recognize them" (Matthew 7:20). An ongoing life of faith and obedience, not remembering a specific date, will give evidence of spiritual life.

Participation of Children in Communion. Children who are welcomed to the Lord's Table cherish that sense of belonging and fellowship. Children like to belong. "Children need to feel that being a part of the church is like being a part of the family. . . Separating children can make them feel unimportant to the total fellowship. It is essential that a child have a sense of belonging and experience meaningful relationships within the worshipping(sic) community from an early age" (Ban 10).

The testimonies of children who have participated in Communion speak of the source of strength and blessing it is to them. Robert Haslam reflects, "When I was a child, my parents included me in the Communion service. I never felt the awesomeness of God so keenly as when I partook of the elements that symbolized Jesus' body and blood. Communion was part of my childhood education. It riveted my attention on the reality of

redemption. Even as a young child, I understood that Jesus died for me and that I was forgiven."

Children learn best through participation. They learn about the people of God at worship by being one of them, by taking part. "Children do have a place in the worshipping(sic) community. Our concern for their spiritual growth leads us to discover how to enable them to be participants. We want them to share in the experience rather than be observers in an adult-centered(sic) worship service" (Ban 11).

The Philosophical Rationale - What does Reason Tell Us?

With many activities and practices children are initiated before there is any hope of a full or even partial understanding of the activity. Most swimming programs have instructional classes for infants. They are not taught in the same way as adults would be, but swimming teachers capitalize on natural reactions and tendencies in infants to teach them to swim. In Canada, where hockey is a national sport, many children begin skating at a very early age. National Hockey League superstar, Wayne Gretzky, began skating at age two. He was not able to understand the physical principles involved in skating, but he could learn to stand on his skates and then move around.

Reason would suggest that this same principle should be considered in spiritual matters. Children may not be able to discuss theological problems, but they can understand that Jesus loves them. They are able to understand the simple truths of the Gospel--that God is holy, they are sinful, sin will be punished, Jesus can forgive their sins and give them eternal life. They can be led to perceive that the Communion meal reminds them that Jesus did something very special for them because of his love

for them. And as this act is repeated and as instruction continues they can gain a larger understanding of the significance of the sacrament.

I do not comprehend exactly how electricity works but I can use and appreciate it. As a child I turned on light switches and worked my electric train. I was not bothered by the fact I did not know just how it worked. I used it. I was not told that I was too young to turn on a light switch or work my electric train. Nor was I instructed to wait until I had a complete knowledge about electricity. As a student in elementary and secondary school I learned something about currents running through wires and switches opening and closing circuits. As an adult my understanding grew deeper when I began to do some basic wiring in the basement of my house and then in my parents' cottage. So throughout my life, I was able to make use of electricity, appreciate it, and benefit from it even though my understanding of it was meagre.

Likewise, it is reasonable to include children in the Eucharistic meal although their ability to explain it or fully understand it may be limited. Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them" (Mark 10:14). He did not suggest they needed full understanding in order to benefit from his presence. They do not need to understand the sacrament in order to be ministered to by the Lord. As they grow in understanding they will benefit more and have a greater appreciation for what Christ has done for them.

As a child I loved my parents. At first I did not understand anything about the sacrifices and work involved in raising me. As I grew older my understanding grew. Now as a parent myself, I know experientially what they did for me. Yet all the time they were pleased to

receive my expressions of love, imperfect though they were. In the same way the Lord is pleased to have children worship him and remember the sacrifice of Christ, even though their understanding of redemption is limited.

Children are malleable. A person's values and attitudes toward life are most strongly formed in childhood. That being so, reason would suggest that teaching children about Christ must be given high priority.

Theology of the Lord's Supper

Free Methodist sacramental theology lies rooted in the theology of John Wesley and in the revivalism of the United States. In theory Free Methodism has retained many of Wesley's views on the Lord's Supper, while in practise the practical realities of the American frontier and the influences of revivalism have created a gulf between Wesley and the Free Methodist Church. In recent years, however, there has been a narrowing of that separation, at least within the Canada Great Lakes Conference. Understanding Wesley's view of the Lord's Supper, then, helps us understand Free Methodist theology of the Lord's Supper. And, I believe, it assists us in discerning perceived change with regard to belief and practice of the Lord's Supper in the Free Methodist Church.

Wesley's View of the Lord's Supper

Frequency. Communion, for Wesley, was one of five instituted means of grace by which believers could grow in their relationship with Christ. It was of great importance and should be received as often as possible. Wesley preached a sermon entitled "The Duty of Constant Communion" in 1733 and in 1788 had not changed his beliefs about frequent Communion. It was the duty of every Christian to receive Communion as often as

possible because Christ commanded it, it benefitted the believer, confirmed one's pardon from sin, and enabled one to leave sin behind (Works VII 147-48). Wesley boldly concludes:

This is the true rule: So often are we to receive as God gives us opportunity. Whoever, therefore, does not receive, but goes from the holy table, when all things are prepared, either does not understand his duty, or does not care for the dying command of his Saviour, the forgiveness of his sins, the strengthening of his soul, and the refreshing it with the hope of glory. (148)

In his instructions to the infant American Church Wesley exhorted the elders to "administer the supper of the Lord on every Lord's Day" (Works XIII 252). Wesley practiced what he preached in this regard. His private journals indicate that he took Communion about four times each week on average (Harper, "Wesleyan Spirituality").

Preparation. Although not absolutely necessary, Wesley also believed it to be important to prepare for the Lord's Supper by self-examination and prayer (Works VII 149). He prepared himself for Communion, often beginning during his Thursday evening devotions and using Nathaniel Spinckes Manual of Private Devotions (Harper, Devotional Life in the Wesleyan 42-3). Wesley also used Saturday as a time of special preparation. According to Steve Harper in his dissertation "The Devotional Life of John Wesley, 1703-38," "the most important thing was to come to Communion with a desire to receive whatever God had to give. One's fitness to receive the sacrament stood second to a sense of sinfulness and helplessness" (273).

The Lord's Supper as a Memorial. Preparation was helpful because of the value of the Lord's Supper to believers. Communion served "to *represent* the sufferings of Christ which are past, whereof it is a

memorial" (Williams 159). When receiving the elements one is "directed back to the once-for-all act of redemption wrought on our behalf by Christ himself" (Harper, Devotional Life in the Wesleyan 37). Borgen suggests that Wesley's concept of memorial went beyond a mere calling to mind. "Not only our mind or memory is involved, but all our senses as well" (Borgen 88). It was like bringing an event to life again in the present so that "it becomes *here and now operative by its effects*" (Bowmer 178).

"And can we call to mind
The Lamb for sinner slain
And not expect to find
What He for us did gain." (cxi, 1) (Bowmer 179)

Such a vivid recalling of Christ's sacrifice for the lost should motivate believers to rise from the table to serve the Lord with renewed vigour.

The Lord's Supper as a Means of Grace. A second dimension of the Lord's Supper was "to convey the first-fruits of these sufferings in present graces, whereof it is a *means*" (Williams 159). Wesley believed that Christ was really present in the elements which are received. Christ is present, not in a bodily manner, but by the power of the Holy Spirit whose task it is to bear witness to Christ and bring Him to remembrance. "Just as outward eating fills and refreshes the inner person, so also 'eating through faith' brings 'the fulness of Christ' into the life of the Christian through the sacrament" (Tyson 83).

Since Christ was really present, Wesley believed "that the Lord's Supper was ordained by God, to be a means of conveying to men either preventing, or justifying, or sanctifying grace" (Works I 280). God's grace at work through the Lord's Supper would either restrain them from sin, affirm their sins forgiven, or renew their souls in the image of God.

The Lord's Supper as a Pledge. The Lord's Supper went beyond the past and present to point us to the future. It served "to assure us of *glory* to come, whereof it is an infallible pledge" (Williams 159). The Lord's Supper pointed forward to the heavenly banquet that believers would enjoy at the marriage supper of the Lamb. It reminds Christians that they have a hope that is sure and steadfast, anchoring their souls. As Tyson suggests, the Lord's Supper is a time when, for a moment, the windows of heaven are open and we can look in full of anticipation (86). Charles Wesley expressed this joyful anticipation well.

How glorious is the life above,
Which in this ordinance we *taste*;
That fulness of celestial love,
That joy which shall forever last!

That heavenly life in Christ conceal'd
These earthen vessels could not bear,
That part which now we find reveal'd
No tongue of angels can declare.

The light of life eternal darts
Into our souls a dazzling ray,
A drop of heaven o'erflows our hearts,
And deluges the house of clay.

Sure pledge of ecstasies unknown
Shall this Divine communion be;
The ray shall rise into a sun,
The drop shall swell into a sea. (Whaling 264-5)

According to Borgen, Wesley believed that as a pledge of our eternal inheritance the Lord's Supper functioned on two levels. "First, the right or title to the inheritance is actually made over to the communicant through the sacrament. . . . Secondly, the holy sacrament is a pledge from the Lord that he will give us his glory, that he will 'faithfully render to us the Purchase'" (218). The Sacrament gave believers a tangible contact with that great cloud of witnesses who had

preceded them (Harper Devotional Life in the Wesleyan 39). It served to strengthen the witness of the Spirit within their hearts that they were children of God and, therefore, heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ.

For Wesley the Lord's Supper served as a wonderful opportunity for believers to grow in their faith, renew their vows to the Lord, and strengthen their hope. Therefore it should be approached with careful preparation and great reverence. It should be received as often as possible.

Free Methodist Doctrine

Frequency of the Lord's Supper. Historically in the Free Methodist Church the faithful were served Communion about once each quarter. Free Methodist Disciplines have consistently instructed pastors to "see that the sacrament is administered at least once in three months" (Doctrines 97; Discipline 1974 180).⁴ This was changed in the 1979 Discipline to "celebrate the Lord's Supper quarterly and more often when possible" (218). In 1979 Pastors were also "to give instruction concerning the meaning and observance of the Lord's Supper" (218). This may suggest a growing emphasis on Communion within the church. Many churches now celebrate Communion more than once per quarter but none come close to Wesley's desire for weekly Communion as put forth in his Sunday service.

The frequency of celebrating the Lord's Supper was affected by several factors in the first one hundred years of the church. Most

⁴A survey of Free Methodist Disciplines confirms that this instruction was maintained without change from 1919 through 1974. It was most likely included prior to 1919 but this was the earliest Discipline available to the writer.

significant were the restrictions placed on who could serve Communion. Until 1979 Deacons could not administer the Lord's Supper but only assist the Elder.⁵ Since many churches did not have elders for pastors they were unable to have Communion except when an elder visited. Often the Lord's Supper was only celebrated at District Quarterly Meetings or upon the visit of the Superintendent.

One of the concerns that led to the founding of the Free Methodist Church was formalism, which had made its way into the Methodist Episcopal Church in the United States. In its reaction against formalism, services with liturgy were looked on with some degree of suspicion. Liturgies which were retained were abbreviated. So it appears that frequent Communion was looked upon as a step toward formalism (Mercer 314, 356).

According to Dean Mercer in his doctoral dissertation "The Liturgical and Sacramental Development of the Free Methodist Church in Canada, with Special Attention to the Rituals of Baptism and the Lord's Supper" Free Methodists also gave greater emphasis to "the service of the Word and the revivalistic techniques of the American frontier" forcing the Lord's Supper into a minor role (356). Worship became dominated by preaching with emphasis on altar calls (Mercer 356). This approach generally held true through to the 1960s and 70s when altar calls became less frequent and nurturing believers became the dominant theme.

⁵"It is the duty of a deacon . . . to assist the elder in administering the Lord's Supper" (Doctrines 90). This remains unchanged through the 1974 Discipline (183). The 1979 Discipline, however, states "The deacon has the authority . . . to administer the Lord's Supper" (222).

With the decline in the revivalist style of worship service the aversion to rituals decreased. Many Pastors now have a seminary degree⁶ and seem to have brought with them a greater tolerance and appreciation of the liturgical. In recent years desire for more frequent Communion has grown. In some cases Pastors are serving Communion with greater frequency at the request of their congregation (Griggs interview). Evidence of this growing interest in the Lord's Supper is in the Disciplinary changes made in 1979 when deacons were permitted to administer Communion and then in 1985 when General Conference extended the privilege to all appointed pastors regardless of ordination (Discipline 1985, Part 1 150). And the practice of Communion has become more frequent in the last decade. Surveys of eighty-eight pastors in the Canada Great Lakes and Canada East Conferences of the Free Methodist Church in 1993 reveal some interesting facts regarding their views and practices in relation to the Lord's Supper. Of the sixty-eight respondents, 43 percent schedule the Lord's Supper more than eight times yearly. Another 41 percent serve Communion about six times yearly, and only 16 percent celebrate it the minimum four times annually.

Preparation for the Lord's Supper. There has never been any emphasis placed on advance preparation for the Lord's Supper by communicants. Sometimes congregations were informed in advance when Communion would be held but this was not a regular practice. In more recent times it is often announced or placed in the church's monthly

⁶Within the Canada Great Lakes Conference in 1991 there were 44 elders. Of the 19 ordained before 1970 only 2 or 3 have Master's degrees and one of those was ordained in 1967. Of the 25 ordained after 1970 17 have Master's degrees, 2 have Bachelor's degrees. The other six have at least a Bachelor's degree but may have more.

newsletter/calendar. In 1979 the Book of Discipline included giving "instruction concerning the meaning and observance of the Lord's Supper" as a pastoral responsibility (218). An implication of this counsel is that preparation for Communion is beneficial. When the 1990 Canadian Book of Discipline was written the entire section on pastoral responsibilities was omitted, so there is no mandate to give instruction or encourage preparation for the Lord's Supper. A few pastors are beginning to encourage people to prepare for the Lord's Supper.

The Ritual for the Lord's Supper. When Free Methodism began it brought with it the Communion ritual from the Methodist Episcopal Church. However, it did make three significant changes. The Thanksgiving and the Gloria in Excelsis along with the rubric of extempore prayer by the elder were omitted by the inaugural General Conference in 1860 (Mercer 316). Since that time the order for the ritual was changed three times, and changes were made to the text of the ritual on five other occasions (Mercer 315). In 1989 the church produced two new rituals for Communion.

These changes were made, it appears, to bring the Lord's Supper ritual more in line with the holiness teachings of the late nineteenth century. Marston suggests that the church "began to revise the stronger suggestions of a 'sinning religion' to meet a reasonable standard of holiness" (Marston 291). The modifications in the ritual have served, perhaps unintentionally, to change the Sacrament from a means of grace and a celebration of the mercies of God to a more memorialistic view of Communion. As Mercer concludes in his study of the development of the sacraments within the Free Methodist Church:

. . . because the church continued to treat both rituals as incidental services and because critical review was suppressed under the pretence that the church was non-liturgical, both these rituals deteriorated to the point that they had become radically different from their historic counterparts. . . the Lord's Supper became a memorial service and an act of personal devotion and meditation. (361-362)

The Free Methodist Church, at least in the Canada Great Lakes and Canada East conferences, is seeing a gradual resurgence in the frequency of and emphasis on the Lord's Supper. Suspicion of liturgy has declined and optional rituals have been produced. In fact, the trend seems to be toward more liturgy as pastors and people accept that true spirituality and ritual are not mutually exclusive.

The Lord's Supper as a Memorial. Free Methodist teaching on the Sacrament of Holy Communion is stated succinctly in its articles of religion. The introduction to the sacraments in the 1990 Book of Discipline reads:

We believe water baptism and the Lord's Supper are the sacraments of the church commanded by Christ. They are means of grace through faith, tokens of our profession of Christian faith, and signs of God's gracious ministry toward us. By them, he works within us to quicken, strengthen, and confirm our faith. (20)

The Free Methodist position on the Lord's Supper is stated as follows:

We believe the Lord's Supper is a sacrament of our redemption by Christ's death. To those who rightly, worthily, and with faith receive it, the bread which we break is a partaking of the body of Christ; and likewise the cup of blessing is a partaking of the blood of Christ. The supper is also a sign of the love and unity that Christians have among themselves.

Christ, according to his promise, is really present in the sacrament. But his body is given, taken, and eaten only after a heavenly and spiritual manner. No change is effected in the element; the bread and wine are not literally the body and blood of Christ. Nor is the body and blood of Christ literally present with the elements. The elements are never to

be considered objects of worship. The body of Christ is received and eaten in faith. (20-21)

The surveys of Free Methodist pastors asked them to indicate their beliefs regarding the Lord's Supper from a list of six statements. Respondents were asked to check all that apply. Pastors from Canada Great Lakes Conference were also asked to gauge their congregations according to the same statements. The results show that there is a divergence from the Articles of Religion in some aspects of belief. According to the pastors, 96 percent of the laity view the Lord's Supper as a memorial of Christ's death while 84 percent of pastors agreed Communion was a memorial. This is in agreement with both the Scriptures and Wesley. However, when coupled with responses to the other five statements one observes that a significant number of Free Methodists have an incomplete view of the Lord's Supper. The Zwinglian view of Communion as a historic event seems to have a serious following among the people.

The Lord's Supper as a Means of Grace. The Lord's Supper is a means of grace. Free Methodist theology agrees with Wesley on this point. Believers are nourished spiritually when they partake of the Sacrament in faith. With this most pastors agreed (88%), but only 72 percent believed that their people would call Communion a means of grace. Yet the Articles of Religion specifically state that the sacrament of the Lord's Supper is a means of grace--something which all who join the church are asked to accept. And only twenty-eight of sixty-eight (41%) respondents to the survey agreed with the statement "Christ is really present in the Sacrament." And when asked to give their opinion on how their congregation would respond, only four or 16 percent felt that lay members

would agree with the statement on real presence. Comments included on the responses suggest that even among those who answered affirmatively there is hesitancy. One reply stated "yes, but only in the same manner as 'where two or three are gathered in my name'" Another person believed Jesus was present "as in any act of worship," while someone else wrote "in an undefined sense." A third person to add a comment wanted to be careful to distinguish his view from consubstantiation or transubstantiation by noting Christ was "present but not in the sacrament." Thus only 29 percent of respondents were comfortable enough with the statement "Christ is really present in the Sacrament" to agree with it without further clarification. Those who commented seemed intent on steering clear of the Roman Catholic belief.

Yet the Article of Religion states: "Christ, according to his promise, is really present in the sacrament" (20). He is not present physically but spiritually through the Holy Spirit. Believers can grow in their faith when they partake of this sacrament in faith. God desires to use this sacrament to strengthen and confirm one's faith. There is no magic changing of the elements into Christ's body and blood. Why, then, is there a lack of agreement with our stated belief? In part it may be a reaction against Catholic theology. It does suggest a lack of clarity in understanding among Free Methodists regarding the sacrament. In my experience there was little teaching on the Sacrament. This was true both of the churches and the seminary I attended. That which was given followed the Zwinglian view. There appears to be a need for clearer teaching so that the doctrine is understood.

The Lord's Supper as a Confirming and/or Converting Ordinance.

Most emphasis is given to the Lord's Supper as a confirming ordinance. Although not specifically ruled out, mention of it as a converting ordinance is rare at best. Pastors are directed to exclude "persons known to be living an immoral life, or to be guilty of any disreputable practice" (Discipline 1990 211). The invitation to Communion opens the service up to those who are repentant and who "intend to lead a new life" (Discipline 1990 211). This suggests that the meal is open to those who are seeking Christ but have not yet been born again. However, the guidelines for allowing children to partake give a different indication. The Board of Bishops ruled that parents may decide when their children are ready to partake of the Lord's Supper. One of the questions parents were to use as guidance was "Does my child have a personal relationship with Jesus" (Van Valin 139)? This strongly implies that Communion is only for Christians and hence only a means of sanctifying grace.

This disparity between the Communion Service invitation and the instruction from the Pastor's Handbook may suggest a double standard. Many feel that children might not approach the sacrament with proper reverence; hence the need for stricter guidelines. On the other hand, many understand the invitation to mean only those who have received Christ not those who are still seeking salvation. The surveys of pastors indicate that only 40 percent believe Communion to be a converting grace while 71 percent would agree that it is a confirming grace.

The sacrament serves as a bond of fellowship for believers. It is open to all believers regardless of denomination. It reminds believers that they are united to Christ and to each other by faith in Christ. It

promotes love and unity since believers cannot partake with a clear conscience if their heart is not right with their fellow believer.

The Lord's Supper serves also as a testimony of one's faith. By partaking, believers proclaim to others that they love Christ and are committed to serving him. It is looked on as a time of renewing one's vows to the Lord and in that way being strengthened in the faith. It is a sign to others that God is at work within one's life.

The elements of the Lord's Supper do not change; they remain simply bread and juice. The body of Christ is received and eaten by faith. It is only as believers partake by faith that they receive any spiritual nourishment.

The Lord's Supper as a Pledge of Heaven. No specific mention is made in the Free Methodist Articles of Religion of the Lord's Supper being a pledge of heaven. However, the Communion ritual includes several references to the believer's hope. Statements such as "grant us, . . . so to eat . . . that we may receive in spirit and in truth the body of Your dear Son, Jesus Christ, and the merits of His shed blood, so that . . . we may evermore live in Him and He in us" suggest the idea of a pledge of heaven (Discipline 1990 213). And included in the suggested rubric when passing out the elements is the phrase, "preserve your soul and body unto everlasting life" (Discipline 1990 214). These statements point believers to their heavenly hope.

In Mark 14:24-25 Jesus says "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many . . . I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it anew in the kingdom of God." Delorme et al write "The joining of the two sentences merely shows, and

that is a great deal, the hope which raised the spirits of the early Christians when they celebrated the Lord's Supper. To them the meal was a promise, an anticipation in this world of the messianic banquet" (43).

In the survey, the idea of the Lord's Supper as a pledge of heaven garnered little support. Only 14 percent of pastors in Canada Great Lakes Conference understood Communion to be a pledge of heaven and only 4 percent thought their congregation would believe so. Twenty-eight percent of Canada East Conference pastors believed Communion to be a pledge of heaven. The limited agreement with this teaching probably stems from two things. First, there is a general lack of teaching on the subject. Second, some confuse the idea of a pledge of heaven with eternal security, thinking those who agree with the statement believe that taking Communion guarantees entry into heaven. Of course, this is not what pledge of heaven means. Rather it is "a promise, an anticipation in this world of the messianic banquet" in which those who remain faithful will partake (Delorme 43).

The Lord's Supper and Prevenient Grace

Salvation proceeds from God's grace. "Sola gratia" was one of the cries of the Reformers and that cry was based on the clear teaching of Scripture. "For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men" (Titus 2:11). It is a teaching that Free Methodists heartily embrace.

The natural man is evil, wholly corrupt. "There is no one righteous, not even one; there is no one who understands, no one who seeks God . . . for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:10-11, 23). But God works in our lives prior to salvation. He

gives grace to all people, as Wesley wrote: "No man is in a state of mere nature; there is no man, unless he has quenched the Spirit, that is wholly void of the grace of God" (Works V 512). This we call prevenient grace. "Prevenient grace, as the term implies, is that grace which "goes before" or prepares the soul for entrance into the initial state of salvation" (Wiley 345). So Wesley contends that "no man sins because he has not grace, but because he does not use the grace which he hath" (Works V 512). Prevenient grace, therefore, "is not only the favor of God, but is a power, the power of the Holy Spirit working in the life" (Cox 32).

God, by his grace, works in our hearts to create a desire and hunger for God. He is active and working in the lives of children before they are able to understand or to explain their beliefs. It is his grace that draws children to Jesus.

The Lord's Supper is a means of grace. Often it is thought of as a means to grow deeper in one's commitment to and love for Christ. But it may also be a means of prevenient grace. Wesley believed "that the Lord's Supper was ordained by God, to be a means of conveying to men either preventing, or justifying, or sanctifying grace" (Works I 280). God's grace at work through the Lord's Supper would either restrain them from sin, affirm their sins forgiven, or renew their souls in the image of God (Works I 280).

Since the Lord's Supper is a means of grace, even prevenient grace, it is beneficial to include children, who, through the working of God's prevenient grace, are generally tender to the Spirit of God. Childhood is very formative. We should do everything possible to encourage children to come to Jesus and follow him. When they join in

the Supper of the Lord with reverence they are encouraged to embrace Jesus who loved them so much that he died for them. God can use these times to bring children to a saving faith in Jesus Christ.

Conclusion

From this brief look at the beliefs of Wesley and the Free Methodist Church one can observe a basic harmony of stated doctrine. Free Methodist Articles of Religion and Communion liturgy include the beliefs that the Lord's Supper is a memorial, a means of grace and a pledge of heaven as Wesley believed. Yet in practise Free Methodists seem unclear regarding what is meant by "means of grace," particularly when the statement "Christ is really present in the Sacrament" is added to the definition. And Free Methodists have largely ignored the teaching that Communion is a pledge of heaven. Free Methodists, generally, have failed to recognize the prevenient grace of God at work in the Eucharist meal. Consequently, the idea of the Lord's Supper being a converting ordinance has been generally discouraged.

The circumstances of the frontier along with the revivalistic approach of the church in its formative years led it to celebrate the Sacrament with much less frequency than Wesley would agree with. Yet this is changing, with most churches moving toward a monthly celebration of the Eucharist. Preparation is another area where the Free Methodist Church seems to diverge from Wesley's emphasis. Teaching children about the meaning, purpose, and practice of the Lord's Supper is one step in restoring this emphasis on preparation. It will provide yet another opportunity for God, by his grace, to work in their lives. It may assist in moving the church back toward its stated doctrine and Wesley's practice.

Other Denominations and Paedocommunion

Free Methodist practice and theology both permit and encourage the inclusion of children in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The Scripture lends inferred support to this practice. Do other communities of faith share this belief and practice? Or are Free Methodists unique in this matter? If other churches permit children at the table of our Lord, do they require or provide any formal instruction regarding the sacrament? In developing a curriculum for teaching children about Communion it is useful to examine the practices of other denominations. To this end I have talked formally and informally with pastors from a dozen denominations.

The Christian Reformed Church at their 1988 Synod adopted a policy allowing children to participate in Communion: "*covenant children who give evidence of faith and are able to discern and remember and proclaim the death of Jesus in celebrating the Lord's Supper*" (Acts of Synod 1988 558). A public confession of faith is part of the requirement. They take their emphasis on being able to discern, remember, and proclaim the death of Jesus from Paul's admonition in 1 Corinthians 11:17-34 on the Lord's Supper. In this passage Paul states "*anyone who eats and drinks without recognizing the body of the Lord eats and drinks judgment on himself*" (11:29). Children who wish to partake must be interviewed by the pastor or elders within the church to confirm that they have adequate understanding of the Lord's Supper.

The action of the Synod states that covenant children, that is those baptized in infancy, who meet the requirements of understanding and faith may participate (Acts of Synod 1988 558) but it says nothing of

children who were not baptized as infants. This question was raised in the minority report to the Synod but was not addressed further (Agenda for Synod 311).

The movement by the Christian Reformed Church to allow children to partake seems to be finding similar expressions in other denominations. Nationally, the United Church of Canada has encouraged but not mandated the participation of children in the Eucharist. Rev. Dale Massender, pastor of the Smithville United Church, stated that locally children are not discouraged from participating when present. The invitation is given for anyone who professes faith in Jesus Christ to take part. Often children are absent during the Communion service. Traditionally they have not participated until after Confirmation, which takes place at age twelve or older. This is changing with the emphasis being on the participation of younger children. Confirmation is the setting during which children are formally instructed about the Lord's Supper. Occasionally Sunday School or the Children's Moments time during worship provides opportunity for some instruction.

The Brethren in Christ Church welcomes the participation of children also. There is no formal instruction given to children other than the regular explanation presented to the congregation at the quarterly Communion service. The Lord's Supper is open to all who know Jesus as Saviour. Parents are urged to guide their children in deciding when they are ready to participate since there is concern that children should not partake if they do not understand. Other than the explanation given during Communion, training instruction about the Sacrament is considered a parental responsibility.

The Full Gospel Fellowship and the Pentecostal Church delegated the responsibility to the parents. Peter Cuke of the Pentecostal Church stated that since the father is the priest of the home he should be the one to teach his children about Communion and decide when they are ready to participate. This is emphasized to parents within their church. So some primary and junior age children partake of the Lord's Supper in these denominations.

In the Baptist Convention of Ontario and Quebec Communion is considered the table of Jesus Christ, and anyone who knows Jesus personally may partake. However, children eight year old & younger generally are in children's church so they do not partake. For nine through eleven year old children the decision regarding inclusion is left with the parents. Youth, ages twelve and older, make their own decision based on whether or not they have been baptized. Instruction regarding Communion takes place during the teen years.

The Lutheran Church allows only those who have been Confirmed to partake of Holy Communion. Children usually enter Confirmation around age twelve or thirteen. Pastor Greg Werdin of St. Peter's Lutheran Church in Simcoe uses a learning package on Holy Communion in connection with Confirmation classes. This curriculum identifies five tasks that the learner should be able to perform following the course. These include an understanding of the relationship between the Passover and Communion, the benefits of Communion, how to prepare for Communion, Lutheran practices of Communion. Some catechism memorization is required also (Werdin 1). This curriculum is designed for Young Teens and younger children would find it too difficult.

Rev. Frank DeVries of the Presbyterian Church indicated that his denomination experimented with paedocommunion some years ago. While there is no official policy and some churches may practice it, most do not. Usually participation in the Lord's Supper begins when a profession of faith is made, usually around ages fourteen or fifteen. A Communicant class leads these youths through the major documents of the church of which the Lord's Supper is a part. Some parents desire that their children be allowed to partake based on the church's baptismal beliefs and practices. Since children are baptized as infants they are part of the covenant family and should be allowed to partake. However, at this point, the cry for paedocommunion is not very loud within the Presbyterian Church.

Within some branches of the Mennonite Church there is discussion on the matter of paedocommunion. Since individual congregations are fairly autonomous some have already begun to include children in the Lord's Supper. Initially, some pastors would include children by offering them some grapes and pronouncing a blessing on them. In some cases, churches are now serving the elements to children. The infrequency of celebrating the Lord's Supper within the Mennonite Church has kept the issue from becoming a burning one. The matter of including children becomes part of the discussion about twice annually.

Pastor John Klassen of the Mennonite Brethren Church stated that there was some movement within the denomination to admit to Communion children younger than age twelve. Within their fellowship twelve is the minimum age for baptism. Currently, baptism is a prerequisite to taking part in the Lord's Supper. At present there has been no change to this

policy, although some believe that eventually children will be allowed to participate.

The Anglican Church in Canada has developed a Communion program for children called Life in the Eucharist. It is designed for children seven years and older. Each child has an adult sponsor. Parents and priests are involved as well. This program was developed in part, according to David Pickett, an Anglican priest in Simcoe, because of a concern that many in the Confirmation program quit attending church once they had been confirmed.

The Roman Catholic Church provides Eucharistic instruction for children also. Children do not participate in the Eucharist until they have received instruction which is done in the school usually at about age seven or eight. Once they have completed the instructional course they have their first Communion, which is an important step in the Catholic faith.

Many churches now permit children to take Communion. In some cases this is a decision left with the parents. In these churches children receive little specific instruction about the Lord's Supper. Instruction is considered the responsibility of the parents as well. Other denominations have realized that the church itself has a responsibility to instruct the children about the Eucharist, and then to actively include them in the meal. At present the Roman Catholic and Anglican Churches have done the most to teach primary and junior age children about Communion. Some churches still restrict the Lord's Supper to people age twelve or older, but the trend, even in these denominations, seems to be toward including younger children. If the Free Methodist Church can benefit from the

practices of these denominations it is in the matter of instruction. Many churches see it as very important that children or youth partake of Communion only after sufficient understanding has been achieved. The Free Methodist Church has included children in Communion for many years while at the same time expecting them to have some understanding of the meaning of the Lord's Supper. Yet the Free Methodist Church has not developed any instructional material for children. It is time we did.

How Children Learn

How do children learn best? This question must be addressed if we are to minister effectively to children. And if we are considering the development of a resource to teach children about the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, then knowing how they learn is critical.

Much of the concern regarding the participation of children in the Lord's Supper relates to the sacredness of the Sacrament. Many believe that children do not understand the significance nor the sacredness of Holy Communion. Therefore, they resist including them in the meal. These people are not anti-child, rather they have the common misconception that children cannot understand spiritual things. Yet most of these very people believe in the value of children's programs. They believe that children can receive Christ as their Saviour.

Are children ready for the Lord's Supper? Can they understand its significance enough to recognize the sacredness of the Sacrament? These and other questions can be more adequately addressed after a look at the development of children.

For many years verbal or written communication was the only barometer in evaluating a child's understanding. Children were evaluated as

small adults with no recognition of their nonverbal and supra-rational development. Through the studies of people like Bruner and Piaget, however, educators are realizing that children *do* learn concepts long before they are able to articulate them (Hines 27). In order to enable us to determine whether or not children should be included in the Sacrament and, if so, how to effectively instruct them regarding it, we must examine the findings of child development.

Pre-Modern Views on Child Development

Although child development may be a recent classification in the study of human psychology, educators and thinkers have had views on the subject for millennia. These views determined the approaches made to the teaching of children.

Ancient Thinkers. Ancient thinkers and leaders believed that a child could be shaped into a desirable person if one could only control what that child might learn. Children were like clay in the potter's hands and could be shaped. Thus a child could be shaped if we managed the information fed to the mind. Plato suggests:

You know that the beginning of any process is most important, especially for the young and tender. For it is at that time that it takes shape, and any mould one may want can be impressed upon it.

- Very true.

Shall we then carelessly allow the children to hear any kind of stories composed by anybody, and to take into their souls beliefs which are for the most part contrary to those we think they should hold in maturity? (Plato 47)

Other ancient writers agree. If one could only control the environment of children, then children could be developed into good people. "What nurture requires, then, is simply censorship. Like Plato,

each would desire that the young be exposed only to the good and not to the bad" (Richards 90).

This theory does not adequately address the matter of child development. While what children are exposed to is important it will not guarantee that they will become good people. This theory, which some have called the Mechanical Mirror Theory (Richards 90), does not adequately address the matter of the sin nature, nor does it consider the learning and thinking processes of children.

John Comenius. John Comenius (ca. A.D. 1650) was the first educator to seriously challenge this assumption. He believed that teaching and learning must be adapted to the characteristics of children. While he emphasizes the importance of moulding the lives of children by example and environment, he goes beyond the ancients when he looks at how children should be trained. Comenius states "Nature follows a well ordered time plan. All material of learning must be divided according to age levels so that only what is within the compass of his capacity may be assigned to the child" (Ch. 16 of Comenius' Great Didactic, quoted in Richards 91). As Richards points out "this statement lies at the heart of the developmental concern of today. *We must understand the child, so that our teaching may be designed to match his capacity*" (italics his) (91).

Comenius identified principles for schooling that he believed must be followed if the education of children was to be fitted to their understanding and patterns for growth. These principles include proceeding from the general to the specific, from the easier to the more difficult; the minds must not be forced to do anything but that to which

they aspire according to their age and motivation; everything must be related through some sense impression, if possible; and everything must be applied immediately (Richards 91).

Modern Theories of Child Development

Psychoanalytic Theory. The roots of this theory lie with Sigmund Freud who believed child development to be socialization through the development of controls that would harness destructive tendencies and channel them into acceptable forms of behaviour. Erik Erikson agreed with Freud's basic concepts about personality. He, however, saw children in a more positive light as seekers who eagerly explore and attempt to master their environment. Erikson identified stages through which he believed children must pass. Table One gives an overview of this theory.

Table 1 - Erickson's Developmental Theory

Age (years)	Psychosocial Crisis (stage)	Significant Person(s)
Birth - 1	Trust vs. Mistrust	Mother
1 - 3	Autonomy vs. Shame/Doubt	Parents
3 - 6	Initiative vs. Guilt	Family
6 - 12	Industry vs. Inferiority	Neighbourhood, Teacher, school
12 - 17	Identity vs. Role Confusion	Peer Groups, Heroes
Young Adulthood	Intimacy vs. Isolation	Friends, Opposite sex
Adulthood	Generativity vs. Stagnation	Spouse, children
Old Age	Ego Integrity vs. Despair	Relationships with others

The first stage is that of trust versus mistrust. The infant must learn to trust enough to grow in a healthy way in a new environment. The mother's affection, loving tone of voice, and touching are keys to developing that trust.

Once children become more physically mobile the parents must place some restrictions on them. At this time children move into the second stage - autonomy versus shame and doubt. Erikson believes that parents who are overly restrictive cause children to become too dependent on others. They will also incur an overly strong sense of shame that will hurt later efforts to become independent people.

Erikson places three to six year olds in the third stage, that of initiative versus guilt. The crisis here is one between the initiating of activities and the disapproval of others. Parents must balance freedom to explore and try new ideas with the potential for harm or destruction. Erikson maintained that if parents were too restrictive children would become guilt ridden and lose the initiative to try new things later in life.

The fourth stage of Erikson's theory (and the age group on which this study focuses) is a period of self-evaluation which he calls industry versus inferiority. Children begin to look at themselves in comparison to other neighbourhood and school children. They rate their competency in school and their acceptance by others. If they fail to develop the necessary degree of competency or acceptance then they develop a sense of inferiority which restrains a sense of self-worth and value needed to become self-assured adults.

Social Learning Theory. Those who espouse variations of the social learning theory believe that significant aspects of the human personality are learned. Some such as B.F. Skinner and his followers maintain that babies are essentially trainable organisms which begin as blank tablets. Their personality is shaped by what happens to them. They can and

should be shaped to provide a better society. Learning follows the simple stimulus-response method.

Others, such as Albert Bandura, see children as active participants in the learning process. "It is believed that what we call 'personality' is actually a set of responses that have been learned by observing social models and interacting with them. But children do exercise choice in the process" (Richards 96).

The Social Learning Theory maintains that interaction with other people, particularly those with whom there are long-term, close relationships, vitally shapes the personality of children. Children will observe and try to imitate those with whom they have such relationships. As they imitate, children begin to internalize behaviours and beliefs making them their own. However, the reactions children receive, either positively or negatively, profoundly influence them to continue or abandon particular behaviours.

Structural Theory. "Structural theorists stress the notion that learning, social activities, morality, and personality develop in a way that is analogous to physical development. The environment of the growing child is important. But the kinds of interaction that can take place within the environment are controlled by the imprint of the genetic code, which decrees a predetermined sequence in the development of cognitive structures (abilities)" (Richards 99).

Jean Piaget, the founder of this school of thought, suggests that children become aware of their own thoughts after age seven or eight. "This awareness is itself dependent on social factors . . . it is through contact with others and the practice of discussion that the mind is forced

to realise its subjective nature and thus become aware of the process of thought itself" (Piaget, Child's Conception 87). Until about age seven or eight children believe everyone thinks as they do so they state their views without feeling the need to prove them. Gradually, they begin to distinguish between several points of view.

Table 2 – Piaget's Structural Stages

Age	Stage	Description of Child's Thinking
1½-4	Preconceptual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • imitative language, only partially understood • objects seem stable, not able to grasp changing shapes due to perspective • lacks abstracting ability to perceive space apart from perspective • beginning to distinguish between past, present, and future • reasoning is by analogy to experiences
4-7	Intuitive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • language and thought still tied to sensory experience: words represent child's own experiences and perceptions (a bottle is where you put water) • understands and can respond to complex adult language, but does not grasp such processes as conservation (the transfer of a principle or characteristic across situations) • objects now maintain identity despite changes in position perspective • number sense develops with ability to measure quantity • can compensate fully for perspective changes caused by change in position • time sense is still personalized, and interactions between time, distance, speed, etc. not grasped • great interest in explaining causes of what is observed, understanding of causes still highly intuitive
7-10	Concrete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can trace change in states through complex series rather than rely on impression of a particular observed state • can take others' points of view and integrate their perspective with their own • can begin to distinguish variables that cause change and mentally predict changes • capacities to perceive objects, numbers, time, space all significantly developed • mechanical explanations of cause are given priority (clouds move because the winds push)
10-15	Formal Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • only now does the ability to think about thought – to explore relations between the real and the possible develop, "adult" kinds of thinking become possible

(adapted from Richards, Children's Ministry, 100)

Table Two illustrates (adapted from Richards 100) Piaget's views on the development of the thinking process within children. Piaget, Kohlberg and other structural theorists maintain that children go through specific stages of cognitive development just as they do in physical growth.

Piaget defines these stages as preconceptional, intuitive, concrete, and formal operations. These stages are related generally to chronological age just as in physical development.

The actual development of children, both morally and cognitively, is impacted by four factors--heredity and maturation, direct experience, social interaction, and equilibration (Stonehouse, Patterns 41-42). These are essential in facilitating development as Stonehouse writes: "Heredity and maturation provide the potential for development. Experience and social interaction are needed to make the potential a reality. The process of equilibration is the inner motor of development" (Stonehouse, Patterns 42). Including children in the Communion service would provide them with the direct experience and social interaction so important to learning the meaning and purpose of Communion.

Cognitive Development

What can children understand? This must be one of our first questions when considering what to teach children. The holistic view of developmentalism observes that the cognitive development of children is affected by the four factors mentioned above. Children's workers cannot affect the God instilled heredity of children. Parents, pastors, teachers, and other workers can, however, impact the cognitive development of children through the opportunities they provide for children to directly experience the world around them. Children learn far more about animals by visiting a zoo than by being told about animals.

Children learn through interacting with others also. As a young child I believed that Christians and Free Methodists were one and the same. As I grew older and met people from other churches I realized that

only some Christians were Free Methodists. Without the social interaction I would have continued to be ignorant of that fact.

When I first encountered Christians from other denominations my firmly held views were challenged. Within my mind a conflict arose. Either my previous understanding regarding Christians was incorrect or the new information was not to be believed. This period of conflict and confusion which developmentalists call disequilibrium was resolved through conversation with my parents.

Piaget, in his studies of child development, has demonstrated that children move through a progression of cognitive phases. Heredity and maturation, direct experience, social interaction, and equilibration affect how well they move through these phases. Children ages four through seven generally are in the Intuitive Phase. They are "me" centred, judging things subjectively by their perceptions. Imitation is a key to learning at this stage. A child playing "mommy" with dolls is engaged in imitation. "Yet studies of this kind of play indicate that children do not copy exactly what they see. Instead they actively reconstruct and interpret the behaviour in their imitations" (Richards 113). Sophia Cavalletti observed this same interpretative imitation. After she had told children a Bible story using wooden figures the children were given a time of reflection. Often they would return individually to the story moving the wooden figures as they retold it to themselves. Cavalletti maintains this is a valuable time of awareness for "it is the time of conversation with the inner Teacher, when the child reconsiders, without the adult, what has been presented and enters into its meaning" (68).

Arline Ban suggests that "concrete experiences, evidenced by the

five senses, can be learned, while symbols, ideas, and theological images are best left to the later teen and adult years" (13). However, Hull argues that Christian educators "have largely ignored the rich wealth and moving power of religious images" due to our concern about a child's ability to understand abstract concepts (20).

The Montessori teaching philosophy has recognized the value of images or symbols. There are two kinds of symbols: conventional and natural. A conventional symbol has meaning because people have agreed to give it meaning. For example, Canada names a place we know about - our own country. The Sacraments are conventional symbols also. A natural symbol is something we experience in everyday life, something in nature we experience with our senses which expresses something beyond sensory experience. For example, bread is a symbol of life (Schmid 30). Children can understand these symbols.

During the concrete period (ages seven through eleven) growth and change is more complex but focuses on the child's increasing ability to deal with concepts. There is growth in the ability to link, to see cause and effect, and to understand series of events in the objective world. This leads children to discover that there are a variety of value systems and lifestyles. And they are beginning to understand abstract symbolic thinking.

Piaget notes that children often appear to understand certain things that are still beyond them. While he believed full understanding required the ability to explain, he felt there is a deep level of knowing God that children have affectively even though words cannot explain it. Robinson feels Piaget assumes reality is the way adults see things.

"Piaget is in fact continually setting children an exam in a subject that adults are good at and children bad" (10). Hines suggests the problem is that we tend to evaluate children as small adults and do not recognize their nonverbal and supra-rational development. "In the past when we said that the child did not understand something the chances are that it was not that the child did not understand but that he simply had not developed the ability to exercise the skill of expressing his understanding in a rational, verbal, adult manner" (Hines 28). This may be the case when children fail to explain the meaning of the Lord's Supper in adult terminology.

John Hull believes we have taken the idea that children are concrete thinkers too far when he suggests that it does not mean they cannot deal with abstract words (9). Some such as Ronald Goldman have concluded from Piaget's principles that "religious insight begins to appear between the ages of 12 and 13" (Robinson 11) suggesting that one should not expose children to the Bible too early because it could lead to misunderstanding and a distorted faith (Richards 68, 121). But children can deal with some abstract ideas. God cannot be seen or touched, but God is also the name of an actual God and as such is "no more abstract than great grandfather whose exploits are still talked of in the family although he is long since dead" (Hull, 8). Hull concludes that "because children cannot understand everything, we must not conclude that they can understand nothing. Children, even when thinking concretely, can think adequately about certain aspects of God, even though some of these aspects are abstract" (10).

Faith Development

Freud believed that "gods and demons 'are creations of the human mind' (1913) and are based on 'revivals and restorations of the young child's ideas of his father and mother'" (Rizzuto 14-15). Rizzuto goes on to suggest that God is really a formation in the minds of people, beginning in childhood as no more than an exalted father (16). Children and adults may have varying concepts of God as J.B. Phillips points out in his book Your God is Too Small. But God's existence or character is not based on our perceptions of what he is like. Phillips goes on to show that it isn't God who changes but our perceptions of him based on example, experience and teaching. The Lord declares through Malachi: "I the LORD do not change" (3:6). Since example, experience, and instruction mold a child's perception of God, then the church needs to carefully consider the images of God they are portraying to children by their approach to such things as children's participation in the Lord's Supper.

Sofia Cavalletti asserts that children have an attraction to God or a spiritual sense for knowing God. While she gives examples of children with non-religious backgrounds who desire to know God (30-39), yet this God consciousness is either nurtured or inhibited by the example of their parents. David Miller argues that "infants and young children who do not see a benevolent God in their parents often grow up to become child abusers, alcoholics, or drug addicts" (16). Scientists now maintain that "the things children are exposed to at a very early age predispose them to move in a certain direction" (17).

James Fowler in Stages of Faith helps us understand both Rizzuto and Phillips when he suggests that people develop through stages of faith

and meaning just as they go through stages of physical, cognitive, and moral development. While he admits that the structural-development theories of Piaget, Kohlberg, and others have contributed to his theory of faith development, Fowler maintains that "faith stages are not identical with and cannot be reduced either to cognitive or moral stages or to some mixture of the two" (Fowler, Stages 99).

The first stage of faith (three to seven years) which Fowler terms the Intuitive-Projective "is the fantasy-filled, imaginative phase in which the child can be powerfully and permanently influenced by examples, moods, actions and stories of the visible faith of primally related adults" (Stages 133). There is an emerging self-awareness, a struggle to control their environment, and an ability to construct reality by stringing together logically unrelated events with marvellous imagination. "While children of this stage tend to deal only with the content of the faith that they are given by adults, they are also actively engaged in their own imaginative attempts to internalize this acquired faith" (Smith 30). And as Rizzuto points out children perceive God differently from other imaginary friends because they observe adults believing in God and worshipping Him (194).

Fowler suggests that the strength of this stage is "the birth of imagination and the ability to unify and grasp the experience-world in powerful images" (Stages 134). Stories are important, but their faith is more caught than taught. As any observant adult knows children are great imitators. This first-stage faith might be called an experienced faith for it is developed through action. Children become curious about meaning of adult beliefs as they observe adults putting those beliefs into

practice. Through this curiosity they are drawn to these beliefs and practices and begin to experience God and understand the beliefs. What is said, therefore, is not as important as what is lived. It is this observation of others combined with the child's experience that gives meaning to the words being taught. Considering worship, stage one children learn best by seeing others worship and trying to imitate them. Activities that enable children to visualize what is being said make worship more appealing and practical.

Most children ages seven through twelve fit stage two of faith development, the mythic-literal stage. Here children begin to take on for themselves the stories, beliefs, and observances that symbolize belonging to their community (Stages 149). Sandell refers to this stage as "affiliative faith" since it is based on the models of parents and other adults (27). Still, faith becomes more concrete and literal, less imaginative and flighty, more a matter of personal conviction (Smith 32).

Story becomes the major way of giving unity and value to experience. They can relate in detail the story which they have read, heard, or seen but do not step back from it to formulate reflective, conceptual meanings (Stages 149). Stage Two children can follow logical progression in thought but have trouble understanding abstract concepts (Smith 31). The child at this stage has an enormous capacity for memorizing facts, understanding causal relationships, generalizing, categorizing, and performing reversible functions (McLarty 44).

Are children too young to properly understand God, the Bible and spiritual things as Goldman and others would suggest? Will they misunderstand the Bible resulting in dangerous misconceptions about God

and faith? Certainly not! Cavalletti observed that children have a far greater capacity for religious knowledge than many adults would think. She states, "children penetrate effortlessly beyond the veil of signs and 'see' with utmost facility their transcendent meaning, as if there were no barrier between the visible and the Invisible" (43). In fact, Daniel Csanyi maintains children who are deprived of Biblical narratives will find it difficult to develop a sense of belonging to their faith community. The anthropomorphic and narrative portrayals of God in the Bible will not implant distorted or inadequate images in the minds of children. Rather, since that is a natural way in which children view things, these provide "stepping stone images" to help them move to the next stage of faith development (521-524). We need to remember that each stage of faith "has the potential for wholeness, grace and integrity and for strengths sufficient for either life's blows or blessings" (Fowler 274).

Participation in the Lord's Supper is a concrete experience that may help primary/junior age children understand more clearly the salvation message. Bob Haslam found that participation in Communion as a young child "riveted my attention on the reality of redemption. . . . I understood that Jesus died for me and that I was forgiven" (Light and Life Press, Bulletin Cover). For Him it was a stepping stone in faith development.

Much of our struggle with including children in aspects of worship such as the Lord's Supper stems from the tendency to compare the spirituality of children to that of adults. Yet it was Jesus who stated that our faith must be like that of a child if we wanted to enter the kingdom of heaven. So while children may not be able to understand and/or express

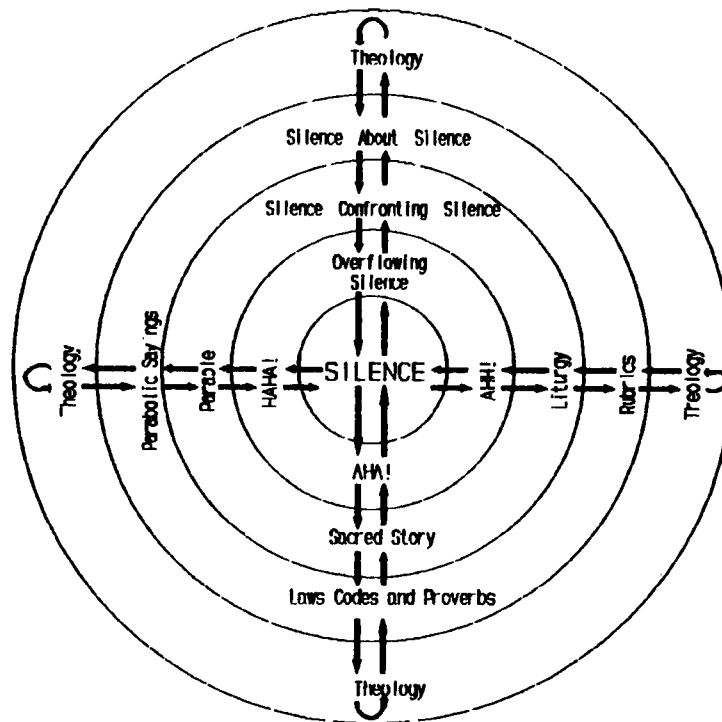
themselves as adults they do have a great capacity to love God and trust in him. With careful planning the worship service can be designed so that they could understand and participate in it. And we must remember the unseen spiritual conflict that rages around us for the souls of adults, teens, and children. Satan will do his best to destroy whatever seeds of faith or sprouts of tender plants may be developing in the lives of children. It behooves us, therefore, not to be unwitting accomplices by excluding children from the life of the worshipping community or by ignoring the normal, divinely created patterns of development. Knowing these general patterns of development helps Christian workers to produce materials and programs that better teach children the truths and symbols of the Christian faith such as the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

Godly Play

The previously discussed principles of child development are moulded into an effective instructional process using religious language which Jerome Berryman calls Godly play. "Godly play identifies, names, and values the religious language domain, and its deep wellspring of silence" (Berryman 154). At the heart of this method is a form of storytelling which elicits worship and imagination. While Berryman observed the limitations of children's reasoning abilities he saw something more. As Catherine Stonehouse summarizes "he heard children wrestling with the mysteries of life and death. He presented the parable of the Good Shepherd to them and saw peace reflected in their little bodies. Even when they could not describe in words the peace they felt or what had brought it (Stonehouse, "Feed My Lambs" 176-77).

There are several layers of religious language and genuine religious knowing which Berryman diagrams as in Figure 1 below. The centre,

Figure 1 - Religious Language and Knowing
(Berryman 152)



pictured by silence, is the presence of God. The first layer of religious language is that experience of the presence and majesty of God which cannot be effectively put into words. It begins with a sense of awe (AHH!) moving to the AHA! of discovery and then to the HAHA! of joy. Children may have such experiences of God. Cavalletti, for example, documented stories of children who had such experiences of God, even without religious training (30-45).

Sometimes this experience breaks into language which Berryman describes as the second layer of religious language--liturgy, sacred story and parable. This is the language of action and experiential language. It

is entering into liturgy, sacred stories, and parables to meet God there; to know God and his ways even if that can't be put into words (Stonehouse, Comments). The method of Godly play brings children into this second layer of religious language.

The third level of religious language Berryman defines as parabolic sayings, rubrics and laws, codes and proverbs. This includes the discussion and application of the liturgy and biblical narratives. If these applications are based on experiential rather than abstract language then children will be able to participate. The lessons on Communion will take the children into this third level. The fourth level of religious language is the theological. Its abstract nature is generally beyond the ability of children to understand.

Berryman describes his experience with two boys over a period of weeks after he had told the parable of the Mustard Seed. In his approach there was always a guided independent reflection time in which the children might do something related to the story just told or a story told in the previous weeks. They might draw a picture, take the figures from the story and re-tell it to themselves or do a number of other activities. Over a period of eight weeks these two boys kept going back to the parable of the Mustard Seed and drawing pictures about the story. Berryman made several observations which he believes are important to teaching and developing faith in children. Seeing the boys return many times to the Mustard Seed parable suggested "the importance of being able to return again and again to an image that has special significance for the individual" (Berryman 55). Over the course of several weeks Berryman observed that the other lessons being taught influenced the

boys' reflections on the Parable of the Mustard Seed. This suggested the value of having the whole context of religious language present in the room.

"Godly play involves a combination of six factors working together to create a situation in which the art of using religious language can be learned well" (61) and thereby foster the development of faith within children. Berryman diagrams these factors to show their connectedness.

Berryman believes all these factors to be important in the development of faith within children since "the images by which we connect the inner and outer worlds to make sense of our journey have to be learned. We have to have our attention called to them. What we have been taught about faith and the means of grace, whether by intention or by default, greatly determines the "eye" we have for faith" (Fowler and Keen 6).

Teaching Methods

Insights into the mental, emotional and social development of children facilitate the development of an effective instructional program about Holy Communion. Awareness of how children process information assists in the formation of lessons and activities that maximize those learning processes. Understanding a child's social development and interactive skills helps one determine when group activities may be beneficial.

Irwin G. Paulsen, in The Church School and Worship, suggests that we make two common mistakes in teaching children. First, we do not sufficiently respect the child's creative capacity for thought, originality, feeling, and intuition. Children have a tremendous capacity for wonder,

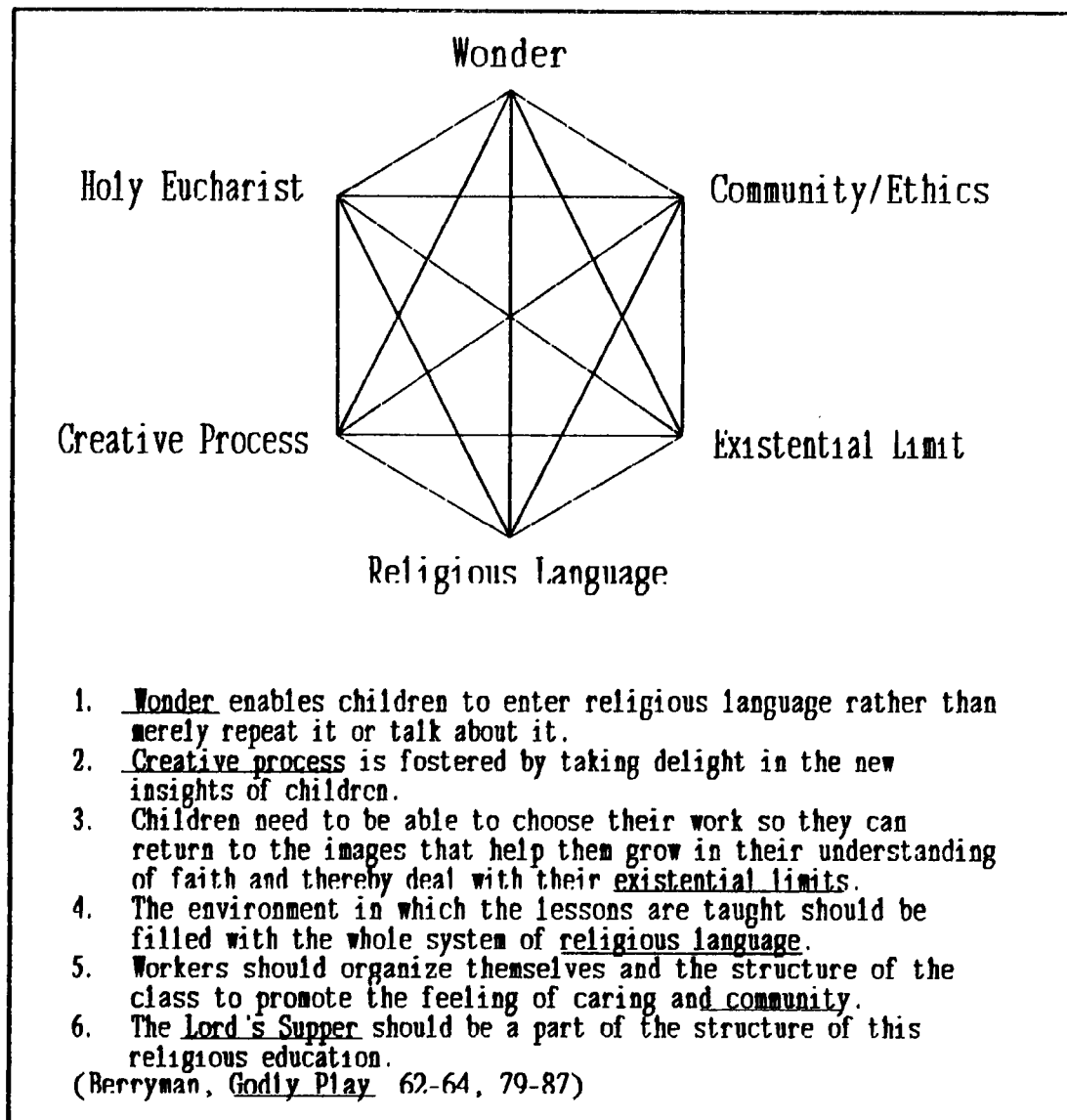


Figure 2 - Elements of Godly Play

curiosity, and questions. In teaching children about the Lord's Supper and in leading them in it, pastors must capitalize on these inherent qualities. Second, we use language, words, and even concepts that have no meaning to children because they are outside their background of experience (38). Many of children's misconceptions about religion arise when adults talk about things they have no categories for (Stonehouse, Patterns 38). The challenge for pastors, teachers and other children's

workers is to discover how to teach biblical truths in terms that the children can conceptualize.

Paulsen goes on to list what he believes are essential conditions for guiding children into significant worship. 1) Relate material back to life. Teachers and leaders must make it practical, showing how the children can apply it to their own lives. 2) Interpret experience in the light of God's existence, nature, presence, and provision. This is largely achieved through the realm of feeling. 3) Use a child's creative capacity. Provide the child with opportunities to cooperate in worship. Involve children as participants instead of mere spectators. 4) Provide a setting conducive to worship. Remove anything that does not assist with worship for these things tend to distract children. 5) Absolute quiet. 6) Expectancy (46). In addition several methods and aids will be valuable in instructing children in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper.

Storytelling. Storytelling is the most effective teaching method with all ages. Jesus used stories or parables with great effect. Good storytelling takes practice and preparation. "The storyteller must personally own and sense the greatness, mystery, and awe of God in the story" (Stewart and Berryman 28). Before attempting to tell a story the storyteller must master the story.

In the accompanying manual (Appendix J), each of the lessons on Communion will bring the Bible to life for the children through story. Whenever possible children will be involved in the story. "Encourage them to laugh, howl, gallop, swim and march right along with the characters," write Fitz-Gerald and Gunter (8). While such exuberant involvement may not always be suitable in lessons on worship this direct

involvement will help children develop a deeper understanding of the story and keep them attentive to it.

Use of Objects. The stories will be made more effective by the use of objects that children can see, touch and feel since they help them participate in the story as if it were happening now (Cully 131). Both Cavalletti, and Stewart and Berryman have detailed the value of using objects, such as wooden figures, in storytelling. The use of figures in telling a story combines mind and body, memory, and movement. Children learn a great deal by watching and hearing stories with movement. Stewart and Berryman suggest that when using these wooden figures an economy of words is best since it leaves less room for distraction or confusion. Usually one does not speak while moving the materials so that children do not have to concentrate on the verbal and visual at the same time. Silence also serves to allow the Holy Spirit to act in the imagination (28-29). Wooden figures of the biblical characters will form an integral part of the lessons.

Questions. Good questions force children to interact with the material. "Wondering" questions make reflection on the story possible. They keep the lesson open by dealing with the children's experience and understanding of the material. Questions that ask for mere facts and details, such as "How many stones did David pick up?" or "What did the Philistines do after David killed Goliath?" interrupt thinking and dialogue. Wondering questions, such as "I wonder how David felt as he ran closer to Goliath?" or "I wonder how the Israelites felt as they watched David go down into the valley?" or "I wonder how the Israelites felt after Goliath was killed?" "permit reflection and enable anamnesis, not just the

remembering of facts but the reliving of the experience. Wondering brings us to a knowledge of God, ourselves, and others in a deep and convincing way" (Stewart and Berryman 30-31).

Questions will be beneficial in teaching children about the Lord's Supper. They will encourage reflection about the meaning of Communion so that when children do partake it becomes more than a mere snack. Instead, children will be led into experiencing mystery in Communion.

Play. Basil Fletcher states, "So the first quality that any teacher must possess, if he is ever to be successful in the early stages of his work with children, is the ability to play" (5). Play is any activity not pursued under compulsion nor for any end beyond itself. It is the result of capricious choice. Play is important as an educational method though it declines in importance as one moves toward adulthood (6). Play will be incorporated into the lessons, giving children that outlet to creatively express what they have learned. Such expression will enable them to remember more clearly what they have been taught.

Drama. Drama is like seeing an event take place before your very eyes. Children are eager to be a part of skits. This involves them in the lesson or story. And depending on the amount of preparation time, it helps them put themselves in the situation of the characters. "Through the dramatic retelling of stories and incidents a child participates in historic events as well as in questions that confront his own generation" (Cully 133).

Dramatization of the Last Supper story will provide more direct experience for the children. This is so important for learning. The

children will become better acquainted with the story and it will assist in moving them beyond mere facts to the emotion of the event.

Music. Adding songs to the story or telling the story through song is another medium for letting children participate and forcefully imparts the message to children. The music of a hymn is just as important as the words for the two cannot be separated (Cully 131). Rob Evans joins songs to his stories. Good songs are easy to remember and sing. Combining actions with songs aids in both remembering and understanding them. With some repetition children soon "catch on" and sing them wherever they go. Educators are once again turning to music to teach things from phonics to geography.

Combining storytelling, use of objects, wondering questions, play, drama, and music together in the curriculum brings doctrine to life. The lessons developed using these methods can help make the Lord's Supper a precious time of worship for children.

Summary

The Free Methodist Church appropriately permits children to participate in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Scripture strongly supports the inclusion of children in the life of the worshipping community. To refuse children Communion because of their age would be to disregard the command of our Lord, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them" (Mark 10:14). Historically, the church did include children in Communion until changes in eucharistic theology made it undesirable to include them. Both reason and experience suggest that including children benefits both the children and the church as a whole.

However, to include children without teaching them the meaning of Communion is inadvisable as well. A general lack of teaching on the subject throughout the Free Methodist Church has led to a poor understanding of the meaning of the Lord's Supper. Children should be taught that Communion is a memorial, a means of grace where Jesus is present in a special way, and a reminder of their heavenly hope. However, in most Free Methodist churches children receive little teaching about Communion because pastors do not have an effective tool to use. The lessons developed from this study fill that void.

Children do have a wonderful capacity to learn. They also go through stages of development--physically, emotionally, cognitively, morally, and spiritually. Because they may not be able to understand or express themselves as adults can, does not mean they cannot understand and appreciate a great deal, even about abstract theological teachings. Children learn best through story, objects, and active participation. These methods will be key elements in the lessons about the Lord's Supper. Spiritual truths can be taught effectively to children using these methods. The Lord's Supper is, in part, an object lesson instituted by Jesus. Could it be that he left us this meal of remembrance so that children might more clearly understand his loving sacrifice for their sins?

CHAPTER 3

The Design of the Study

The Problem Stated

Commonly Free Methodist pastors must respond to requests to serve Communion to children under the age of twelve. These requests may come from the parents or from the children themselves. Parents wonder when it is appropriate for their child to participate in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The Free Methodist Pastor's Handbook affirms the right of children to partake of Communion and exhorts parents, pastors, and teachers to provide instruction for children. Still, within Ontario, only about 25 percent of pastors provide any formal instruction to children about the purpose and meaning of the Lord's Supper.

The lack of tools for pastors to use is a significant reason for this. If there were instructional resources available to pastors or children's workers, then most children would receive teaching on this Sacrament. And since there is generally an increase in the frequency of Communion within Free Methodist Churches it becomes even more critical that adequate instruction is provided.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to develop and evaluate curriculum for teaching children the purpose, meaning, and practice of the sacrament of the Lord's Supper. This chapter will describe the curriculum that was developed for use with children in Grades one through six and the process used to evaluate it. A practical and effective tool for use by pastors, teachers, and parents in nurturing children regarding Communion within the Free Methodist Church in Canada was the goal of this study.

Hypothesis

Often children are confused about the meaning and purpose of the Lord's Supper. Generally, they have received little teaching on the subject. They wish to take part simply because they do not wish to be left out of activities in which most of the church participates. Some have a basic understanding that the Lord's Supper helps us remember that Jesus died on the cross for us. However, the ritual is filled with big words of which they have little understanding.

This instructional course for children in Grades one through six addressed the paucity of understanding with regard to Communion. The goals of the course were:

- Children who take the course will show a greater increase in knowledge of the Sacrament than those not receiving it.
- Children who receive the instruction will express a greater satisfaction in taking Communion than those who do not receive the instruction.
- Receiving instruction paves the way for the Lord's Supper to be a place where children experience the presence of Christ and grow in him as they partake of this means of grace.

Such grounding in an important part of our worship will strengthen the church for the future.

The advancement of the children varied depending on factors such as age, level of parental commitment to Christ, and level of understanding at the beginning of the course. Since the testing validates the above suppositions, we may conclude that the course will be a useful tool for pastors and churches to use with children.

Subjects

The study operated in two Free Methodist Churches over a five week period. The author instructed the children of Caistor Centre Free Methodist Church and Rev. Paul Shaw taught the children at the Dunnville Free Methodist Church. The children in these studies included nineteen children--nine from Caistor Centre and ten from Dunnville--in Grades one through six. The Pastor of each church contacted the eligible children and their parents to explain the program and determine their willingness to participate. This was important since we wanted the children to be present for each class.

Dunnville is a small town near Lake Erie. In the last decade it has been plagued by industry closures leaving very little industry in town. Many of the people commute to Hamilton or other larger centres for work. Dunnville has a significant poverty level and a high rate of alcoholism. The Free Methodist Church is small averaging in the low forties in worship. It is predominately blue collar in make-up. Only seven of the ten children from Dunnville were able to participate in both the Pre-test and Post-test. Of the seven interviewed three had parents who never attended church services; two had one parent who attended regularly; both parents of the other two children attended regularly.

Caistor Centre is a rural community in the Niagara Peninsula of Southern Ontario. It is located about forty kilometres from Hamilton. The Free Methodist Church has a one hundred year history in the community and presently has thirty-five adult members. Worship attendance averages about fifty-five. The church has a sizable number of professionals, particularly in the health care field. Several others are

business people and labourers in blue collar industries. A majority of the congregation have lived in the community for all or most of their lives. Four children in the study have parents who do not attend the church, three children have parents who are active members, one child's parents are members whose attendance is irregular due in part to work schedules, and the other child has one parent who attends regularly.

The children involved in the study were tested before and after the course. They were asked the same series of questions both times. Children were invited to make a drawing reflecting their understanding of Communion to supplement the questions. The picture was used to engage the children in further dialogue about Communion. A comparison of the Pre-test and Post-test serves to show the effectiveness of the course.

Instrumentation

Prior to the testing some demographic information was collected. This included the name, address, phone number, age, and grade of each child. The information form also asked for the membership status and attendance patterns of the parents (see Appendix A).

The testing instrument included:

1) a drawing made by each child illustrating their understanding of the Lord's Supper based upon the following instructions: "What is special to you about Communion? Draw a picture that tells how it is special to you."

Appendices G and H contain the drawings and comments made by the children.

2) a semi-structured interview protocol was followed with each child using the questions listed on the interview form in Appendix B. These questions were generally, but not slavishly, followed. The children were questioned

first about their own drawings. Next the interviewer showed them four pictures drawn by artist Kevin Patterson (see Appendices C, D, E, F). Each picture captured the theme of a lesson and was used in the lesson. During the semi-structured interview protocol the interviewer showed the pictures one at a time asking questions about each before proceeding to the next picture.

The instrument was developed based on the themes of the lessons. The artist drew the pictures based on input from the author regarding the theme of each lesson. The pictures were then incorporated into the lessons. Since children respond better to concrete images the pictures were used in the interviews to help them picture the themes of the lessons. The non-directive questions were used in the interview. This approach was taken in order to avoid children simply giving answers they thought the interviewer wanted to hear. The interview instrument was not pre-tested.

After the testing was completed the results of the tests were analyzed. The observations from those tests or interviews are outlined in Chapter 4. The main focus of the analysis was to discover if there had been any significant growth in understanding of the Lord's Supper.

Lesson Objectives

The lessons on the Lord's Supper for children were designed with four objectives in mind.

1. Through the lessons children will learn the Bible stories on which the Lord's Supper is based. The Free Methodist Church bases all its teachings and practices on the Word of God. Therefore it is important that children understand that the Lord's Supper is founded upon

Scriptural instruction. Bible stories will be told with each lesson to help accomplish this objective.

2. Children will understand the meaning and purpose of the Lord's Supper through these lessons. Children will learn that the Lord's Supper is a remembrance and memorial, a means of grace, and a reminder of our hope of heaven. Activities and illustrations will help make these abstract concepts comprehensible to the children.

3. The liturgy is an important part of the Free Methodist Communion service. Through these lessons the children will become familiar with the ritual. This will help them to participate in the ritual with greater meaning. Furthermore, children will demonstrate a greater reverence as they participate in the Lord's Supper thereby addressing a concern expressed by many adults.

4. Through these lessons children will encounter Christ at Communion. They will know that when they come to the Lord's Table they are coming to Jesus. For them Communion will become a time of meeting Jesus.

Jesus said, "Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them" (Mark 10:14). If these lessons enable children to encounter Jesus more fully through Communion, then they will have served their purpose. Understanding facts has value but it is more important that children grow in Christ by use of this means of grace. A developing understanding of redemption and the meaning of Communion will facilitate spiritual growth and make the Lord's Supper a cherished time of spiritual communion and nurture.

The Lessons

Concern for the need of specific instruction of children regarding the Lord's Supper led to an examination of the biblical and theological understanding of both ministry to children and the Lord's Supper. The results of this research are examined in chapter two of this study and mould the foundation for the content of the lessons. My research into child development theories as discussed in Chapter 2 forms the basis for the methods to be employed in teaching children about Communion. Reviewing the conclusions of the research will demonstrate why the lessons have been designed using the content and methods selected.

Goals

The need for the pastoral teaching of children about the Lord's Supper has been demonstrated. Since children should be included and since they need instruction, what should they be taught?

1. Children need to know that the practice of the Lord's Supper is biblically based. From their earliest Sunday School class children are taught that what we believe and do is based on the Bible.
2. In developing the child's understanding of Communion it is important that they gain a well-rounded view of its meaning. It is, most obviously, a memorial or remembrance of Christ's death on the cross for our sins. His sacrifice made possible our salvation. Children ought to know this and remember it each time they take Communion.
3. As we have demonstrated earlier, many within the Free Methodist Church have lost sight of the fact that Communion is more than a memorial or remembrance. It is that, but it is also a means of grace, a time when Christ is really present among us in a special way. The Lord desires to

meet with us in Communion. He desires to nourish our souls so that we are strengthened to serve him. When children have an understanding of this they will come to the Table expectantly.

4. Communion also serves to remind us of our heavenly hope. Jesus has invited us to a heavenly marriage feast. The Lord's Supper is a fortaste of that heavenly banquet. Learning this will help to make heaven more real to children. Jesus has promised to return when it is time for that great banquet. He has instructed us to be ready and waiting. The Lord's Supper can become a time of glorious expectation and a reminder to be ready.

5. Within the Free Methodist Church a liturgy is followed by the congregation in preparing to eat the Lord's Supper. The liturgy was read together during the lessons with the test groups and a summary explanation of each prayer was given. The aim was to give the children some familiarity with the ritual enabling them to participate with greater meaning and benefit.

After these concepts are taught children will be equipped to understand what Communion means and why we take it. This will lead to a greater reverence in approaching the Sacrament. Children will be strengthened and grow in their faith. They will also feel a greater sense of belonging to the body of believers.

The material is designed to involve the pastor in teaching. The pastor's involvement in teaching the instructional course will serve to build or strengthen relationships with the children. They will understand that he or she is pastor to children as well as adults. Taking time to

teach children will convey the message Jesus conveyed when he took children upon his knee and blessed them.

Lesson Outlines

The study was conducted over a five week period beginning and ending on the monthly Communion Sundays.

Pre-test. The children who agreed to participate in the study were joined with the rest of the congregation in the celebration of the Lord's Supper during our regular monthly observance. Following the service of worship the children remained at the church to share a meal together. After the meal general instructions were given regarding the instructional course. The children were invited to draw a picture or pictures that tell about the Communion service and how they feel about it. Following this exercise I talked to the children individually asking them about their understanding of the Lord's Supper (see Appendix B). These interviews were videotaped. Rev. Paul Shaw followed the same interview procedure at Dunnville.

Lessons 1-4. The first four lessons were taught in the weeks between monthly Communions. The specific days and time were established through consultation with those involved. Each lesson followed a similar format and included the following elements:

1. Welcome
2. Story
3. Singing
4. Activity/ Reflection Time
5. Lesson about the meaning of Communion
6. Prayer
7. Talk about Communion liturgy
8. Benediction

Lesson 5. The final lesson was given during the Sunday School hour of the next monthly Communion Sunday. This lesson involved the

children in the preparation of the Communion elements, including the making of unleavened Communion bread. It also provided an opportunity for children to ask any questions they might still have about Communion.

Lesson five followed this outline:

1. Introduction
2. Retell story from Lesson One
3. Activity - Making Communion bread
4. Questions about Communion
5. Preparation of Communion Elements
6. Hymn # 321 - According to Thy Gracious Word

Post-test. In the service of worship following lesson five Communion was served. After the service the children remained for lunch. Following lunch they were engaged in a Post-test. The format for the Post-test was the same as that which was used for the Pre-test. Using the same exercises and questions permitted a comparison of the understanding of the children at both times. The children in the Dunnville group were interviewed subsequent to the day of the final lesson due to scheduling conflicts. The Post-test interviews from Dunnville were audio-taped only while the Caistor Centre interviews were both video-taped and audio-taped.

CHAPTER 4

Findings of the Study

General Observations

The study was conducted in two churches. Rev. Paul Shaw taught a class of ten children in the Dunnville Free Methodist Church and I took nine children through the study in the Caistor Centre Free Methodist Church. Five of the children came from homes in which both parents were actively involved in the church and attended regularly (three were children of pastors). Five others came from homes where only one parent attended. Eight children had parents who seldom or never attended church and one child came from the home of members who attended sporadically partly due to work schedules.

The children ranged in age from five to twelve years. Twelve of the children were of primary age and one of the older children had a learning disability. She fit in with the primary children more than with her own age group. Only sixteen of the nineteen participants are included in the evaluations. The three who are not included were unable to participate in both interviews.

In both settings general observations showed a growth in the children's knowledge and understanding of the Lord's Supper. Pastor Paul Shaw indicated that he was shocked at the significant difference between responses in the Pre-test and the Post-test.

Interview Findings

Interviews were conducted with the children who participated in the study. The same interview was used both before and after the course. Children were asked to draw a picture describing what was special to

them about Communion. After completing their pictures they were interviewed individually. The interview began with questions about their picture. Following this the children were shown four more pictures, one at a time, being questioned on each one (See Appendix B for the interview questions and Appendices C, D, E, and F for the pictures). Each of the pictures related to one of the lessons in the course.

The interviews were taped by video or audio devices. Subsequent to the interviews the tapes were reviewed and notes taken on the responses of each child. In some cases it was impossible to understand the audio tape, although there was enough to understand the general sense of their responses.

Since the interview questions were not directive I followed the principles described below in measuring their responses. This, I believed, would give a more equitable depiction of their grasp of the lessons. Both general observations by the adults involved and their own illustrations led me to believe that their specific understanding of the concepts was not adequately demonstrated by the non-directive approach in the interviews. Chapter 5 will address the problems with the testing in more detail.

Data Analysis

The Semantic Differential measuring tool in Table 3 has been used to graph the responses of the children for comparative purposes. Their replies to each of the five pictures were evaluated cognitively and affectively using the following tool. Thus in evaluating their responses using this tool the lower the score the better the comprehension of the material.

Table 3 - Semantic Differential Tool

A. Knowledge/Understanding								
Strong	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Vague
B. Affective grasp								
Animated	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Lacklustre

Table 4 - Pre-test - Post-test Differential

Picture	Pre-test	Post-test	Difference
1. Drawing By Child			
A. Knowledge/Understanding	4.50	3.25	1.25
B. Affective grasp	4.00	2.75	1.25
2. Jesus on the Cross			
A. Knowledge/Understanding	3.81	3.25	0.56
B. Affective grasp	3.75	3.13	0.62
3. Jesus the Good Shepherd			
A. Knowledge/Understanding	5.25	3.94	1.31
B. Affective grasp	4.63	3.31	1.32
4. The Heavenly Feast			
A. Knowledge/Understanding	5.13	3.81	1.32
B. Affective grasp	4.69	3.31	1.38
5. Jesus Calling Matthew			
A. Knowledge/Understanding	5.75	4.06	1.69
B. Affective grasp	5.38	4.06	1.32
Overall Knowledge/Understanding	4.89	3.66	1.23
Overall Affective grasp	4.49	3.31	1.18
Combined Overall	4.69	3.48	1.21

The results of the Semantic differential grading shows a definite improvement in both the cognitive and affective domains among the children. Generally the children showed a growth in knowledge and

feeling with respect to the lessons. Some children missed one lesson and this tends to be reflected in the tests.

The children's general understanding of the Lord's Supper formed the basis for measuring their own drawings and their comments on the drawings. My own observations about their pictures were compared with those of my Reflection Group⁷ and Mrs. Carol Fick⁸. There appeared to be a significant difference in detail and subject matter between Pre-test and Post-test drawings. Carol Fick noted that most Post-test drawings contained more detail which generally suggests a better understanding of the subject. This difference was significant enough that Mrs. Fick was able to determine in almost every case which drawings were Pre-test and which were Post-test. Seven of sixteen Pre-test drawings were unrelated to the subject of Communion while in the Post-test only two could be considered unrelated. A growth in understanding may be observed in the drawings by Brittany. In the Pre-test she drew only a picture of the church with no clear relation to Communion. Her Post-test drawing is a picture of Jesus. While her explanation still suggests some vagueness on the meaning of Communion she did seem to understand that it included the presence of Jesus. Jamie's pictures more fully demonstrate this shift in understanding. His Pre-test picture of his mother and baby sister have no relationship with the Lord's Supper. In the Post-test he drew a

⁷The Congregational Reflection Group is a committee of five members from my congregation who have met with me regularly during the development of this Dissertation Project. Its purpose is to provide me with feedback and insight from a layperson's perspective.

⁸Carol Fick holds an MA in Psychology and is presently concluding a PhD program in Clinical Psychology at the University of Saskatchewan. She has experience in assessment work with children. Her observations were most helpful.

their sense of his presence with them as children provided the foundation for measuring their responses.

Lesson Three taught children that Communion was also a reminder of their hope of heaven. The banquet picture (see Appendix E) was used in conjunction with the lesson. The story for Lesson Three took the form of a skit on the Last Supper. The banquet illustration may also be understood to depict the Last Supper or a Communion meal. As a result of this and the non-directive questioning children's responses were evaluated on their understanding of the picture to be a heavenly banquet, a Communion meal with Jesus, or the Last Supper.

The final illustration - Jesus calling Matthew (see Appendix F) - was used in Lesson Four. This lesson dealt with who should take Communion. Evaluation of their responses to this picture centred on their understanding of what was happening in the picture and who the people were.

All of the children interviewed showed growth based on the Semantic Differential scores. The average improvement was 1.21 points per question per child. Thirteen of sixteen improved by 1.0 points or more per question. Of the three that showed the least improvement one missed a lesson. With the responses to that lesson removed from the evaluation the child averaged a 1.0 point per question improvement. Another child showed only a 0.8 point per question improvement. However, this child demonstrated the most complete understanding of the Lord's Supper both before and after the lessons. Her average Pre-test score of 2.1 points per question improved to a 1.3 points per question in the Post-test. The child who showed the least improvement (only 2 points

total) was given both the Pre-test and Post-test in the home due to scheduling problems. The Interviewer felt that this score did not give an accurate measurement of this child's understanding. The reasons for this are outlined in the Problems with Testing section of Chapter 5.

Three children showed an improvement of greater than 1.5 points per question between the Pre-test and Post-test (see Tables 6, 7, and 8 for their Semantic Differential Scores). Children A and C were from families of regularly attending church members. Their scores were better than the average both in the Pre-test and Post-test. Child B's parents never attend church. Her 6.3 points per question score on the Pre-test reflects this lack of parental input. In the Post-test her own drawing about Communion included several people, the Communion elements, and some other things relating to the serving of the Sacrament. Her initial picture had none of those things. It had one person in a room praying. Most responses in the Pre-test had to be coaxed. When shown the artist's pictures she did not know what was portrayed except in the picture of Jesus on the cross. In fact when viewing the picture of the Heavenly Feast she was asked, "Do you know what heaven is?" to which she replied, "No." In the Post-test she did have some knowledge of heaven and stated that she thought about it.

Child A's Pre-test drawing did relate to Communion and he thought those who took it might be glad to be Christians. The Post-test drawing had greater detail and included the person of Jesus. Child A talked more personally about what he felt during Communion. His responses to the pictures other than the Jesus on the cross picture were more detailed and demonstrated a deeper understanding in the Post-test. For example, when

viewing the picture of the Heavenly Feast he was asked about heaven. In the Pre-test Child A stated he thought about it sometimes in church. During the Post-test he launched into a description of what heaven was like.

The Pre-test drawing by Child C showed only a person praying and his responses showed little understanding of Communion. In contrast his Post-test drawing was a detailed picture of Jesus on the cross and included other people. Child C indicated the other people in the picture were soldiers laughing at Jesus. In the Pre-test Child C was quite unsure about who was represented in the Good Shepherd picture. He stated he felt close to Jesus at bedtime. In the Post-test he knew that Jesus was talking with children and their parents. Child C felt close to Jesus "when someone dies or something." He seemed to be relating the presence of Jesus to comfort during difficult or sad times.

Observations beyond these interviews support the conclusion that the lessons accomplished their purposes in developing a greater knowledge and understanding of Communion in the children. Since completing the lessons, some of the children have made comments to me that suggest the lessons have had a continuing impact. In subsequent times of Communion the children appeared more involved in the service and tarried at the altar longer than most adults. The next chapter evaluates the findings of the study and makes recommendations based on the findings.

As with most things these concepts will need reinforcement to be remembered and appreciated throughout the years. Brief statements or stories prior to serving the Lord's Supper will help achieve this. Further teaching on the subject in the teen years will build on this foundation.

Table 6 - Semantic Differential: Child A

Age: 8

Parents' Church Relationship: Members, Attend regular

Pre-test ☐Post-test ☐

1. Picture drawn by Child - What is special to you about Communion

A. Knowledge/Understanding

Strong 1 ☐ 2 ☒ 3 ☐ 4 ☒ 5 6 7 Vague

B. Affective grasp

Animated 1 ☐ 2 ☒ 3 4 ☒ 5 6 7 Lacklustre

2. Picture of Jesus on Cross - Communion helps us remember Jesus

A. Knowledge/Understanding

Strong 1 ☐ 2 ☒ 3 4 5 6 7 Vague

B. Affective grasp

Animated 1 ☐ 2 ☒ 3 ☒ 4 5 6 7 Lacklustre

3. Picture of Good Shepherd with Children - Jesus is present with us at Communion

A. Knowledge/Understanding

Strong 1 2 ☒ 3 ☒ 4 5 6 7 Vague

B. Affective grasp

Animated 1 2 ☒ 3 ☒ 4 5 6 7 Lacklustre

4. Picture of Heavenly Feast - Communion is a promise of heaven

A. Knowledge/Understanding

Strong 1 ☐ 2 ☒ 3 4 ☒ 5 6 7 Vague

B. Affective grasp

Animated ☒ 1 2 3 4 ☒ 5 6 7 Lacklustre

5. Picture of Jesus and Matthew - Communion is for those who want to follow Jesus

A. Knowledge/Understanding

Strong 1 2 ☒ 3 4 ☒ 5 6 7 Vague

B. Affective grasp

Animated 1 2 3 ☒ 4 ☒ 5 6 7 Lacklustre

Table 7 - Semantic Differential: Child B

Age: 12

Parents' Church Relationship: Never attend

Pre-test ☐Post-test ☐

1. Picture drawn by Child - What is special to you about Communion

A. Knowledge/Understanding

Strong 1 2 3 ☐4 5 ☐6 7 Vague

B. Affective grasp

Animated 1 2 ☐3 4 5 ☐6 7 Lacklustre

2. Picture of Jesus on Cross - Communion helps us remember Jesus

A. Knowledge/Understanding

Strong 1 2 3 ☐4 ☐5 6 7 Vague

B. Affective grasp

Animated 1 2 3 4 ☐5 6 7 Lacklustre

3. Picture of Good Shepherd with Children - Jesus is present with us at Communion

A. Knowledge/Understanding

Strong 1 2 3 4 ☐5 6 ☐7 Vague

B. Affective grasp

Animated 1 2 3 ☐4 5 ☐6 7 Lacklustre

4. Picture of Heavenly Feast - Communion is a promise of heaven

A. Knowledge/Understanding

Strong 1 2 3 4 ☐5 6 ☐7 Vague

B. Affective grasp

Animated 1 2 3 ☐4 5 6 ☐7 Lacklustre

5. Picture of Jesus and Matthew - Communion is for those who want to follow Jesus

A. Knowledge/Understanding

Strong 1 2 3 4 5 ☐6 ☐7 Vague

B. Affective grasp

Animated 1 2 3 4 5 ☐6 ☐7 Lacklustre

Table 8 - Semantic Differential: Child C

Age: 7

Parents' Church Relationship: Members, Attend regular

Pre-test ☐Post-test ☐

1. Picture drawn by Child - What is special to you about Communion

A. Knowledge/Understanding

Strong 1 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 7 Vague

B. Affective grasp

Animated 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 7 Lacklustre

2. Picture of Jesus on Cross - Communion helps us remember Jesus

A. Knowledge/Understanding

Strong 1 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 7 Vague

B. Affective grasp

Animated 1 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 7 Lacklustre

3. Picture of Good Shepherd with Children - Jesus is present with us at Communion

A. Knowledge/Understanding

Strong 1 2 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 Vague

B. Affective grasp

Animated 1 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 ☐ 7 Lacklustre

4. Picture of Heavenly Feast - Communion is a promise of heaven

A. Knowledge/Understanding

Strong 1 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 7 Vague

B. Affective grasp

Animated 1 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 7 Lacklustre

5. Picture of Jesus and Matthew - Communion is for those who want to follow Jesus

A. Knowledge/Understanding

Strong 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 7 Vague

B. Affective grasp

Animated 1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 ☐ 6 7 Lacklustre

CHAPTER 5

Summary and Conclusions

Most products are field tested before being placed on the market. The field testing helps to identify the appeal of the product, its strengths, and its weaknesses. The study has served this purpose for the lessons for children on Communion contained in Appendix J. Interviews with the children before and after the lessons and the experience of teaching the lessons have led to some significant improvements in the material. This chapter evaluates the lessons and lists the recommendations that have been incorporated into the lesson manual as a result.

Problems with Testing

While the testing indicated that the children had gained in their understanding of the meaning and purpose of the Lord's Supper it did not always provide a clear reading on their grasp of specific lessons. Several factors impacted on this.

1. The questions asked during the interview were non-directive. The pictures shown to the children were the only specific connection with the lessons. Questions such as "Who should take Communion?" with reference to Lesson Four may have revealed a clearer picture of whether or not they understood the lesson. Further probe questions would have more clearly revealed the extent of the learning which did take place.

2. The artist's pictures were not a central item in the lessons. The lessons focused the attention of the children more on the wooden figures than on the pictures. So while the pictures were used in the lessons,

they may not have brought that lesson immediately to mind when used in the testing several weeks later.

3. The capacity of children to verbalize at a level where content can be evaluated is limited for the majority of the children in the test groups.

4. In the case of one child a delay in the Post-test interview may have impacted her results. In the case of this child, who showed only a two point overall improvement in the Semantic Differential Scale, both interviews were conducted in the home. The Post-test interview was delayed by about two weeks and her parents were not present at the time. During the Post-test the Interviewer had the distinct impression that the child was not interested in doing the interview. In the Pre-test interview the child drew a more detailed picture using a variety of colours. In the Post-test the child used only a ball point pen, even though the coloured markers were available, and she spent very little time completing the picture. The person drawn in the Post-test was a mere stick figure while in the Pre-test there were several people with full bodies, hair, and clothing. Based on the child's approach to the drawing, her responses to the questions, and the Interviewer's knowledge of the child's abilities, it was felt that the responses did not reflect the child's full level of understanding. This hypothesis was posed to Carol Fick when she was viewing the child's pictures. Mrs. Fick suggested that the Post-test picture did tend to support that hypothesis.

5. The Semantic Differential measuring tool would have been more useful had it been more refined. Since it has a seven point scale the requisites for achieving each point should have been clearly defined prior to the testing. This was impossible to do without pre-testing the

measuring tool. Time limitations made this impossible. Both congregations in the study had no children besides those involved in the lessons who could be used to pre-test the evaluative tool. Yet the tool did provide sufficient clarity to demonstrate a change in the cognitive and affective level of understanding of the children.

6. By its very nature the evaluation process is very subjective. Since I designed the lessons it is only natural that my bias would be toward their workability. Therefore, I might tend to be less objective in determining the extent of learning and growth which took place. Yet, my basic evaluations are born out by Pastor Shaw and by my Congregational Reflection Group. Pastor Shaw observed a significant difference in understanding between the Pre- and Post-tests. He had been somewhat disturbed by the significant lack of understanding of such concepts as heaven by children in the Pre-test interviews. The Post-test interviews revealed a much greater understanding of the subject. The Reflection Group noticed a significant growth in understanding between Pre- and Post-test interviews as revealed in the drawings made by the children and their comments on them.

Achievement of Objectives

Several objectives for the lessons were outlined in Chapter 3. The aim of the study was to identify the ability of these lessons, properly taught, to meet the stated objectives. The problems with the testing instrument (as described above) make it more difficult to determine the success or failure in meeting some of these objectives.

Learn Biblical Foundation for Communion through Bible Stories

The responses of the children in the interviews suggested a greater

knowledge of the biblical stories surrounding Communion. The picture of Christ and the children at a banquet table was intended to remind children of the heavenly banquet that awaits children in heaven. The picture was used briefly in the third lesson in which children enacted a skit of the Last Supper. Their response to the picture in interviews shows a significant change (see Table 9). While only one child accurately suggested that the picture represented the heavenly banquet it is easy to understand how children might conclude otherwise. In the Post-test eight of the children described it as a Communion meal with Jesus or the Last Supper whereas only three had done so before. The rest of the children identified the picture as a meal with Jesus. This would suggest that the skit enacted by the children remained with the children. References to the heavenly banquet also shared in that same lesson did not immediately

Table 9 – Lesson Three: The Heavenly Feast Picture

Children's responses to "What is happening in this picture?"				
	Communion/ Last Supper	Meal with Jesus	Heavenly Meal	Other
Pre-test	3	7	0	6
Post-test	8	7	1	0

come to mind. The children remembered what they had done. They remembered the story. Through this picture the concept of Communion as a reminder of our heavenly hope might be better communicated if the picture was revised to convey a more distinct image of heaven.

The response to the picture of Matthew used in lesson four showed a noticeable change also (See Table 10). Only two children knew it was Matthew in the pre-test. After the lesson nine of sixteen suggested that Jesus was calling or healing Matthew. Six of the children identified Jesus

in the picture but did not remember who the other main character was. The only child who was totally uncertain about the picture had missed

Table 10 - Lesson Four: Jesus Calling Matthew Picture

Children's responses to "What is happening in this picture?"			
	Jesus helping/ calling Matthew	Jesus helping/ healing someone	Doesn't know
Pre-test	2	8	6
Post-test	9	6	1

that lesson.

The interview questions did not directly address the story of the last passover from lesson one but the responses of the children to the banquet picture suggest that they remembered the story. When the story from lesson one was to be retold in lesson five several children at Caistor Centre wanted to tell the story. This would suggest that they believed they remembered it.

When responding to the picture of Jesus as the Good Shepherd children did not say "Jesus the Good Shepherd," but there did seem to be a better understanding, at the Post-test, of what Jesus was doing in the picture. In this case direct questions about the story may have revealed more.

In spite of the problems with the testing instrument, enough was revealed to suggest that this objective was achieved. The children's knowledge of the Bible stories grew significantly. Their responses to the banquet picture indicate an understanding that the practice of Communion was started by Jesus and is biblically based.

Understand the Meaning and Purpose of Communion

Through the lessons it was hoped the children would understand

that Communion is a remembrance of Jesus' death for our sins, a means of grace in which one experiences the presence of Christ, and a reminder of our hope of heaven. The interviews revealed that the children understood Communion to be a remembrance of Jesus' death on the cross. Through their drawings and responses in the interviews the children demonstrated a clearer understanding of this concept in the Post-test.

The pictures the children drew in the Post-test include the person of Jesus more often than the Pre-test pictures. This lends support to the belief that many of them came to see Communion as a place where they encounter Jesus. Most of the Post-test drawings are more detailed. Carol Fick indicates that this is significant for it demonstrates a better understanding of the material.

There was little direct evidence that the children understood Communion to be a reminder of their hope of heaven. Children did appear to have a somewhat better understanding of heaven but did not directly connect Communion with heaven. This may simply be the result of the approach taken in the interview. The limited focus of the subject in contrast to the acting out of the Last Supper may have also impacted the children's responses. Overall, the children did grow in their understanding of the meaning and purpose of Communion.

Become Familiar with the Liturgy

Extensive time was not given to the liturgy in the course of study. Time limitations of the Sunday School hour made it impossible as did the attention span of the children. Teaching on the liturgy focused on a one sentence explanation of each section of the ritual followed or preceded by a repetition of several parts of the liturgy. For the non-readers this

made no noticeable impact in their attention to the ritual. There was somewhat more participation in the second Communion service. One girl (my daughter) seemed to have caught something from the liturgy since in her Post-test picture she drew the members of the Godhead all saying "I love you" to the communicant. This was significant in that she drew both a dove to represent the Holy Spirit and a ghost to represent the Holy Ghost. It is only in the Communion liturgy that she regularly hears reference to the Holy Ghost.

During the lessons the liturgy was practiced using overhead transparencies with large print. The younger children find the larger print easier to follow. Since it is impractical to use the overheads during actual Communion services my Dissertation Committee suggested printing a large print booklet for children to use during the Communion service.

Develop Greater Reverence in the Communion Service

Observations during the two Communion services suggest there was some growth in reverence. In the Pre-test Communion service children who were unfamiliar with the service did not follow the ritual. They tended to look around at others in uncertainty and confusion. Following the course they tended to pay closer attention to the service and even participated to some extent in the ritual. Their approach to the altar and conduct at the altar also suggested a deeper understanding of its significance.

Encounter Christ at Communion

This objective is almost impossible to evaluate. How can one evaluate the inward workings of the Spirit of God in a child at Communion? I will share two observations that suggest to me that

children encountered Christ at Communion. First, the pictures the children drew in the Post-test include the person of Jesus more often than the Pre-test pictures. Second, at our Christmas Eve Communion Service I invited Communicants to come to the altar whenever they were ready and stay as long as they wished. Most did not stay any longer than usual. But two of the girls who took the course remained at the altar for a considerable time after being served. Would they have stayed if nothing was happening? I doubt it.

Evaluation of the Lessons

Stories

The lessons were, on the whole, very well received by the children. Both pastors observed that the children paid close attention during the stories. The use of wooden figures was very beneficial to the learning process. They helped draw the children into the story. By the fifth lesson some of the children wanted to tell the story. Some of the figures were only thirteen millimetres (one-half inch) thick and had a tendency to fall over on the felt. (The children enjoyed a good laugh when it happened). The wider sixteen millimetre (five-eighths inch) figures stood up well.

The children were quite eager to participate in the skit of Lesson Three. We used a loaf of unleavened bread which I broke in two, handing it to the children on either side of me. They each broke off a piece and handed it on. This continued until every one had a piece. Since our society discourages drinking from the same cup we used individual juice glasses - not tiny Communion glasses. Using actual unleavened bread and

grape juice during the skit heightened the significance and reality of the Last Supper event for the children. If time permitted, this event could be developed more and performed for the church, further strengthening its impact on the children.

The pictures used with the lessons varied in their effectiveness. The picture of Jesus on the cross was most effective and the children easily identified it as Jesus dying on the cross for our sins. While the picture of Jesus as the Good Shepherd conveyed the idea of Jesus as a friend of children, it did not sufficiently remind the children of Christ's presence at Communion. Nor did the children refer to Jesus as the Good Shepherd. The banquet picture was supposed to communicate the idea of the heavenly feast that awaits the believer. However, the children described it as the Last Supper or Communion. The fourth picture brought better results. Nine children knew in the Post-test that it was Jesus calling or helping Matthew whereas only two identified Matthew in the Pre-test. These observations regarding the limited effectiveness of the pictures led to the recommendation from my Dissertation Committee that several of the pictures be revised.

Activities

The children enjoyed the activities and seemed to handle them quite well. The non-readers needed extra help to do the Letter Maze in Lesson Two and the Matching Game in Lesson Four. It would be advisable to have an assistant in the class to lend a hand with activities. In Lesson Four there was insufficient time for the children to do both activities in class. As a result the Wordmaze activity was sent home with the children as a take home activity. In an attempt to accommodate the non-readers or

beginning readers of the class I developed two versions of the Letter Maze and Wordmaze. The easier version of the Letter Maze had all the words written in the blanks. This worked quite well for the younger children. The easier version of the Wordmaze had most words printed in the normal left to right fashion. One word was written vertically top to bottom on the left side of the puzzle. Since the children took this activity home there was no opportunity to evaluate it.

The children were thrilled with the opportunity of baking unleavened bread for the Communion service. Lesson Five became a very hectic lesson for two reasons:

- a) Shortage of help - I made the attempt to conduct this lesson by myself. The children had little problem putting the ingredients in their bowls. I had the ingredients lined up on a table with the proper measuring device. When they began mixing the ingredients I had difficulty keeping up with requests for help. The Junior age children had little problem mixing and rolling their bread. However, the majority of my group were primaries.
- b) Shortage of time - With additional workers we may have had more time for the other elements of the lesson. However, it appears that forty-five minutes is insufficient. In our case we managed to bake the bread, have the story, and prepare the elements. There was no time for questions or singing. The Dunnville test group did not make the bread because they lacked proper baking facilities in their church. To compensate, Pastor Shaw brought in soda crackers to help explain unleavened bread.

Singing

One innovation made during the lessons was to add motions for the Communion song "According to Thy Gracious Word." We learned only the

first three verses of the hymn. The motions helped the children remember, understand, and enjoy the song. These motions will be included in the manual. During the Post-test Communion service this hymn was sung. Unfortunately, I forgot to tell the congregation about the actions for the song or suggest we do them. Nevertheless I observed several of the children doing them on their own. This is another example of how motion can enhance a song for children and help them remember it.

Pastoral Involvement

Pastor Shaw indicated that teaching the lessons to the children was a new challenge for him. Teaching the course on Communion helped him develop a closer relationship with the children. The children, he felt, came to see him not as the pastor of the adults only but as their pastor too. This was not as noticeable in my test group with good reason. For the last year I have been teaching the Primary Sunday School Class and in our two and one-half years at Caistor Centre I have been active in leading a yearly VBS and special monthly activities. As a result the children had already come to see me as their pastor. This was one of the objectives of this course. Pastors who delegate the teaching of this material to others will miss an important opportunity to build and strengthen relationships with the children in their church.

Communion Service

Many of the younger children found it difficult to participate in the ritual. As stated earlier, observations during the Pre-test service found that younger children and those from non-churched homes did not follow the ritual very well. They tended to look around and were easily distracted. During the Post-test service those who read did follow

somewhat better. Literate children from church families participated better in the ritual in both services. A couple of factors impacted this:

- a) Children of members sat with their parents. The parents helped them follow along in the book. Children without parents in the service did not have any assistance. This problem could be addressed by having another adult in the congregation "adopt" them for the Communion service.
- b) Children of members had been in Communion services before. They knew what to expect and so were better able to participate.

Once we finished reading the ritual and the pastor consecrated the bread and the juice all the children watched carefully. Motion and concrete objects drew their attention and held it.

Recommendations

Teaching these lessons for the first time was a learning opportunity.

Based on both Pastor Shaw's and my experiences the following recommendations have been made and incorporated into the Lesson Manual.

1. Make wooden figures out of sixteen millimetre (five-eighths inch) thick wood.
2. When making the bread recruit one helper for every two primary-aged children and one assistant for every three or four Juniors.
3. Schedule Lesson Five at a time other than Sunday School

- a) Teach lesson five on a Saturday in order to allow sufficient time for story, baking, questions.

- b) Teach lesson five Sunday late afternoon/ early evening followed by a special Sunday evening Communion service in which the children participate and are specially recognized as having completed the lessons.

4. Match children whose parents do not attend with an adult in the congregation for the Communion service. Instruct the adult to assist the child during the liturgy.

5. Include several scheduling options for the lessons in the introduction to the manual of instruction.

a) Sunday School Hour - The advantage of this time might be in the ease of scheduling and probability of better attendance on the part of children. The main drawback to this time period is the time limitation. Generally, a Sunday School time would provide only about forty-five minutes at the most for each lesson. In both groups this was found to be somewhat rushed.

b) Weeknight or Saturday - Schedule five weeks with the children. This provides a less restricted time frame that would allow for questions, follow-up interaction with the story figures by the children, etc. The drawback to this approach will be mainly in achieving a full participation on the part of children in the congregation due to conflicts with other activities. Yet in most cases this could be overcome.

c) Once a month for five months - This approach offers the same advantages as "b." In churches where bringing children together for five weeks on a weekly basis may be unworkable due to other midweek activities, this may provide a suitable option.

4. Recruit several people to assist in the classes. Their help will be valuable for the activity time. They are especially important with the children who are non-readers.
5. During the Communion service following the course, use the hymn

"According to Thy Gracious Word" with the actions. Children may be invited to the front to help teach the congregation the actions.

6. Give special recognition to children who complete the course of instruction. Hand out a certificate to each child during the Communion service following the course. If the course is being offered on a weeknight or Saturday a special "graduation" Communion service may be scheduled on the sixth week or as an extension of the fifth week's lesson. The children invite their parents and friends, receive a special certificate, and celebrate Communion.
7. Revise the pictures of Jesus as the Good Shepherd (Lesson Two) and Jesus and the heavenly Banquet (Lesson Three). The Good Shepherd picture was revised to show an adult and two children kneeling at the Communion rail with Jesus the Good Shepherd blessing them. This will better convey the presence of Christ in Communion. The heavenly Banquet picture has been revised to include a more elegant room and background images of angels and the heavenly city. While the picture of Matthew seemed fairly effective it was recommended that a picture of Zacchaeus be used instead, since his calling and conversion are more focal in Lesson Four. Zacchaeus gives a articulate illustration of the Communion Invitation taught in Lesson Four. The revised pictures are included in the Lesson Manual.
8. Revise the story of Lesson Three to focus more on the fact that Communion helps us remember that Jesus is preparing a heavenly home for each of us.
9. Develop a bulletin board to reinforce the lessons. This will provide a visual reminder of the lessons. A caption such as "Communion Helps Us

Remember " might be used as the overall heading. After each lesson add the picture for the lesson and the related caption. The pictures could be arranged around the outside. A picture of Jesus and pictures of the participating children could be placed in the middle of the bulletin board.

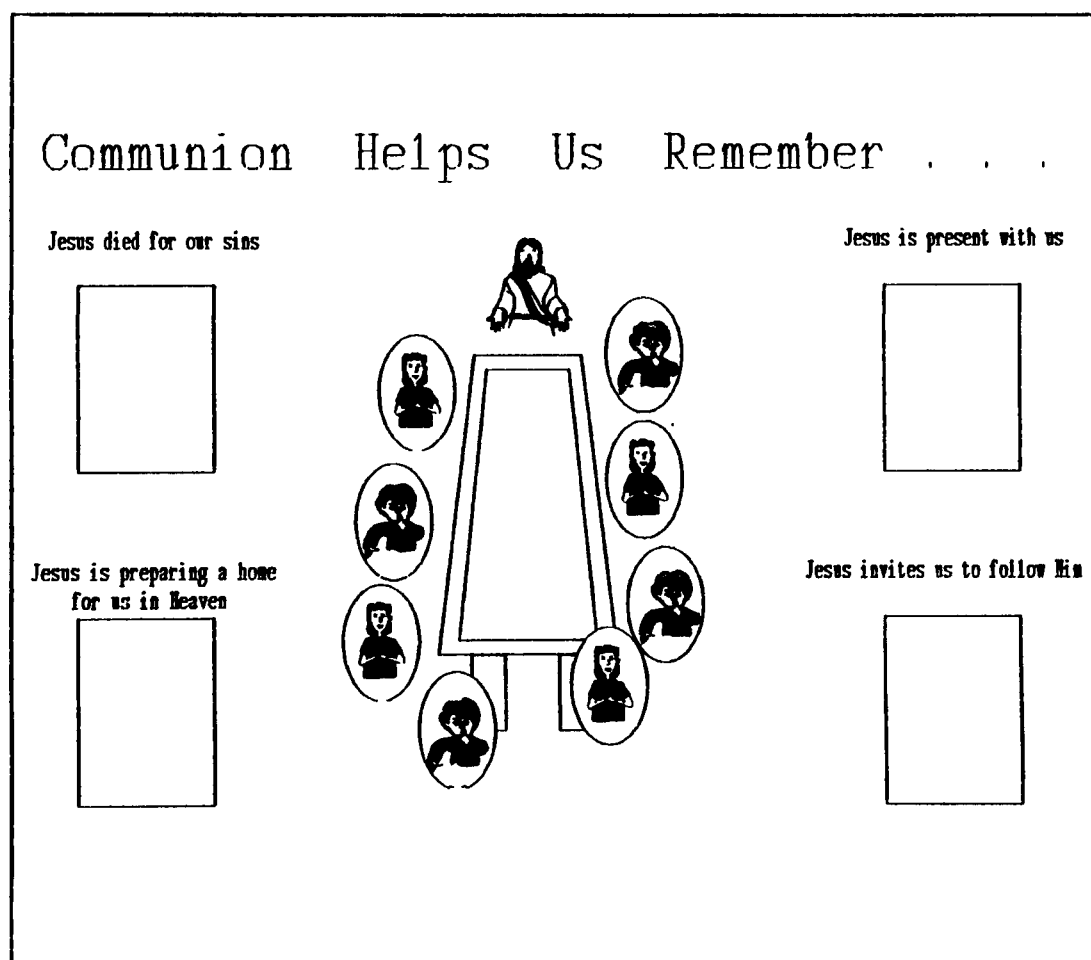


Figure 3 - Communion Bulletin Board

Figure 3 illustrates a possible bulletin board.

10. Make a large print booklet of the Communion liturgy for children to use (visually impaired people might also find them helpful). These booklets should be distributed at the beginning of the worship service and then collected after the service. See the Lesson Manual for an

example of the booklet.

The Lesson manual that is included in Appendix J includes the refinements that have been recommended. It has been re-organized to make it more user friendly.

Conclusion

This project began with a question during my first pastorate in 1981. A young mother from our church asked me, "How old should my child be to take Communion?" I checked my Pastor's Handbook for guidance on the matter. There it stated that children should have a desire to participate, a conversion experience, and a basic understanding of Communion. I shared that with the mother and soon her child joined in our Communion services.

Through the years the question has been raised many times. The matter of children and Communion became more personal when my own children expressed a desire to participate. The third part of the Bishop's advice--that children should have an understanding of the meaning and purpose of Communion--concerned me for two reasons. I wondered why we require an understanding of Communion from children but not from adults. Moreover, the Church did little to provide instruction to the children in this matter. This concern finally germinated into this dissertation project.

Surveys of Free Methodist pastors in Ontario largely bore out the fact that children receive little formal instruction about the Lord's Supper in our churches. More and more children were being allowed to participate. Using the Wesleyan quadrilateral--Scripture, tradition, experience, and reason--the question of the participation of children in the Lord's Supper

was examined. Scripture gives strong support to the full inclusion of children in the life of the worshipping community. Jesus words, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them" (Mark 10:14) speak powerfully to this matter. Until the middle ages children were included in the Eucharistic meal. The experience of children who have received the Lord's Supper shows us that they can truly encounter Christ. Reason affirms their inclusion since children are malleable and learn best from concrete experiences, of which Communion is one.

Although children should be welcome at the Lord's Supper I still believed that understanding was important. First, people derive more blessing from worship when they understand what they are doing and why they are doing it. Second, Peter counselled us, "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have" (1 Peter 3:15). Understanding what the Lord's Supper means and why we celebrate it is a part of understanding our hope.

This led me to examine Scriptural and denominational teachings on the sacrament of Holy Communion. Since our denominational roots lie to a large extent with John Wesley it was important to gain an understanding of his teachings of the subject. Wesley taught that the Lord's Supper had a threefold meaning. It was a remembrance of the death of Christ for the sin of the whole world; it was a means of grace in which the believer may experience the real presence of Christ; and it was a pledge or reminder of our heavenly hope. Free Methodist doctrine agreed with this in theory, although surveys suggested that many Free Methodists viewed Communion only as a remembrance of Christ's death. Such findings

served to underscore the need for more instruction in this vital act of worship.

Lessons were then designed to teach children the three basic meanings of the Lord's Supper. The study of child development and learning patterns led me to develop lessons that emphasized the concrete and visible in teaching these concepts which tended to be abstract. Biblical stories, two of which were adapted from Young Children and Worship by Stewart and Berryman, used wooden figures. Activities such as drawing pictures, a matching exercise, a letter maze, and wordsearch all served to reinforce the theme of the lesson.

The study demonstrated the effectiveness of this approach. The children displayed a high level of interest in the stories and activities. The Communion hymn took on new meaning and enjoyment to the children with the addition of actions. In the teaching of the lessons, use of concrete objects such as bread, juice, and vegetables, which the children enjoyed eating, was effective educationally and held their interest. The addition of these food items led the children to engage all their senses in the learning process.

The liturgy used by the Free Methodist Church in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper has been given some attention in the lessons. Initially, I had planned to give more attention to the ritual. I felt that children who knew and understood the liturgy would be able to participate better. However, wise counsel from those advising suggests this might be attempting too much. The study bore out the wisdom of their counsel. The lessons would have been much too long.

So, while the ritual was not dealt with extensively the lessons did take

the children through it with a view to helping them feel more comfortable with it. The Communion services revealed that children who had an adult to help them read along with the liturgy participated better. Instruction in the liturgy might be addressed at the youth level when abstract concepts are more easily grasped.

Did the lessons accomplish their objectives? Chapter 4 gave a detailed analysis of the lessons. While the limitations of the testing procedure did not provide all the data hoped for, there was sufficient to conclude that the lessons did achieve their objectives. This is borne out through the drawings made by the children (see Appendices G and H), the observations of adults, and the observations of both pastors who taught the lessons.

These lessons provide a resource for pastors to use with children in their congregations. The recommended changes as a result of the study serve to enhance the lessons further.

I believe strongly that pastors should be involved in the teaching of these lessons. Doing so will not only help them develop a closer relationship with the children but will give them a better understanding of how children think and learn. That has been my experience. Ministry to children is vitally important. Including them fully in the life of the worshipping community will only enhance their love for Christ who said: "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these" (Mark 10:14).

Appendix A: Information Form

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Age _____ Date of Birth _____

Grade _____

Father _____

Church Status: Full member _____ Preparatory member _____

Non-member _____

Attendance: Regular _____ Sporadic _____ Never _____

Mother _____

Church Status: Full member _____ Preparatory member _____

Non-member _____

Attendance: Regular _____ Sporadic _____ Never _____

Appendix B: Testing Instrument

A. Interview Process

Children who participated in the study were interviewed before and after the teaching of the lessons. On the Sunday prior to beginning the lessons and on the Sunday when the lessons concluded Communion was served in the Worship Service. Both times the children remained following the service for lunch and an interview. The children were asked to draw a picture relating to their experience and feelings about Communion. Upon the completion of their drawing each child was interviewed by the Pastor.

The interview included questions about their picture. Then they were asked questions relating to four pictures that were used in conjunction with the lessons. Details of these questions are listed below.

The interviews took place in a Sunday School classroom. The children did their drawings and were served lunch in the fellowship room of the church. While waiting for their turn to be interviewed they watched a Christian video.

Interviews were recorded by both audio and video recorders. Both mediums were utilized in part to insure against possible failure of the one. The video camera was set up and focused on the location of the interview and left to operate without manual adjustment. It was hoped that this would minimize the distraction such a machine might cause. Likewise the tape recorder will operate without constant attention. This appeared to be successful as the children seemed to quickly forget about the presence of the machines.

To help the children relax I talked to them about some of their

interests, pets, and so forth before starting the interview. Most relaxed easily. Each interview lasted about 15 minutes.

B. Interview Questions

The following questions were posed to the children before and after the study.

1. What is special to you about Communion? Draw a picture that tells how it is special to you.

- a) Tell me about your picture.
- b) Who are these people in the picture? What are they doing?
- c) Tell what else is happening in the picture?
- d) How do the people feel? What might they be thinking or saying?
- e) How does it make you feel?

(Other questions may be elicited from the picture or response of the child)

2. Show children the picture of Jesus on the cross.

- a) Tell me what you think is happening in this picture.
- b) Who is the person in the picture?
- c) How do you think he feels?
- d) Why did Jesus die on the cross?

3. Show children the picture of the Good Shepherd with children.

- a) Tell me what you think is happening in this picture.
- b) Who are the people in the picture?
- c) How do you think the children feel to be with Jesus?
- d) How does Jesus feel about the children?
- e) Are there times when you feel close to Jesus?

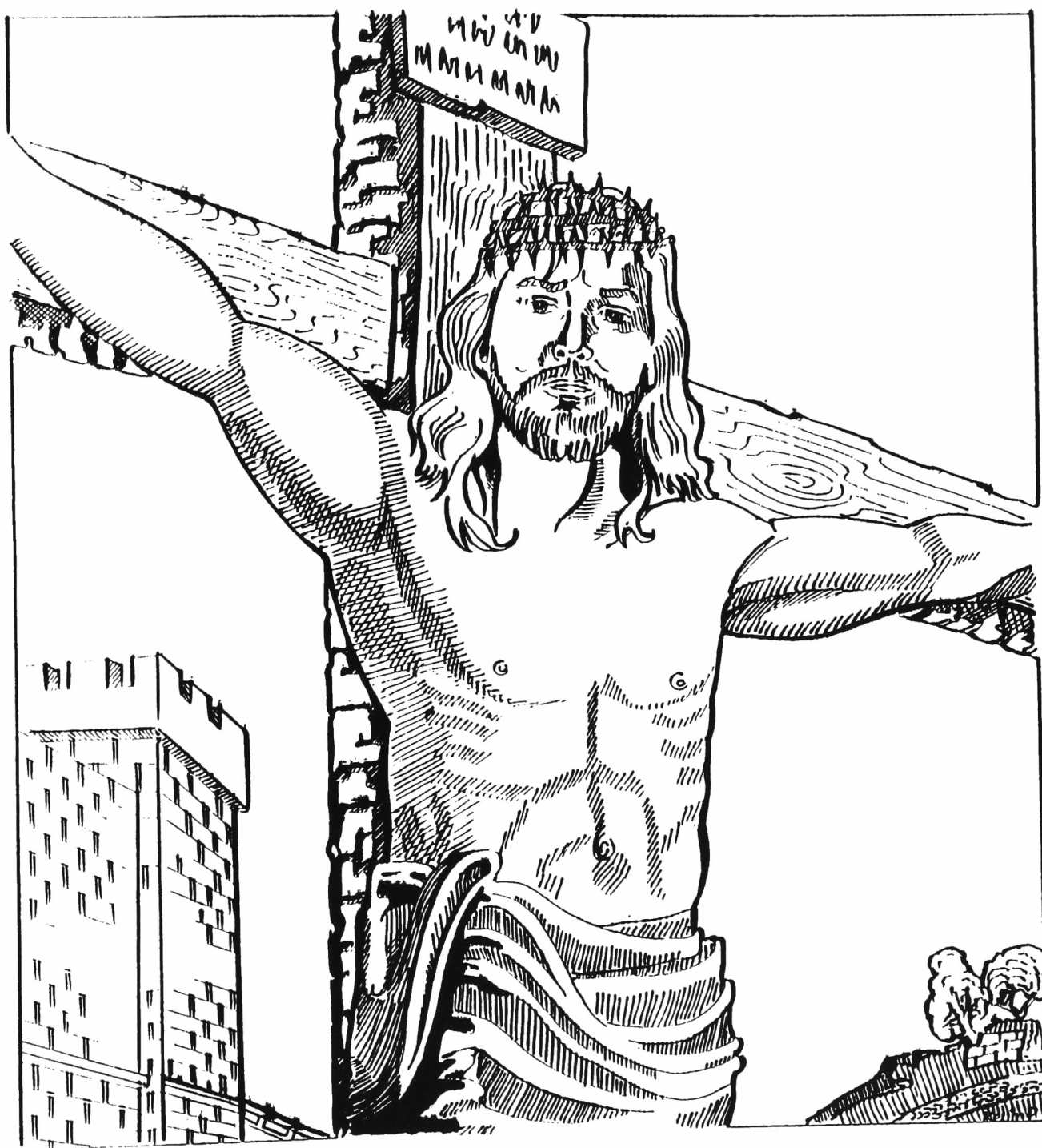
4. Show children the picture of Jesus, children and banquet.

- a) Tell me what you think is happening in this picture.
- b) Who are the people in the picture?
- c) How do you think they feel?
- d) Do you ever think about heaven?

5. Show children the picture of Jesus calling Matthew.

- a) Tell me what you think is happening in this picture.
- b) Who are the people in the picture?
- c) How do you think they feel?

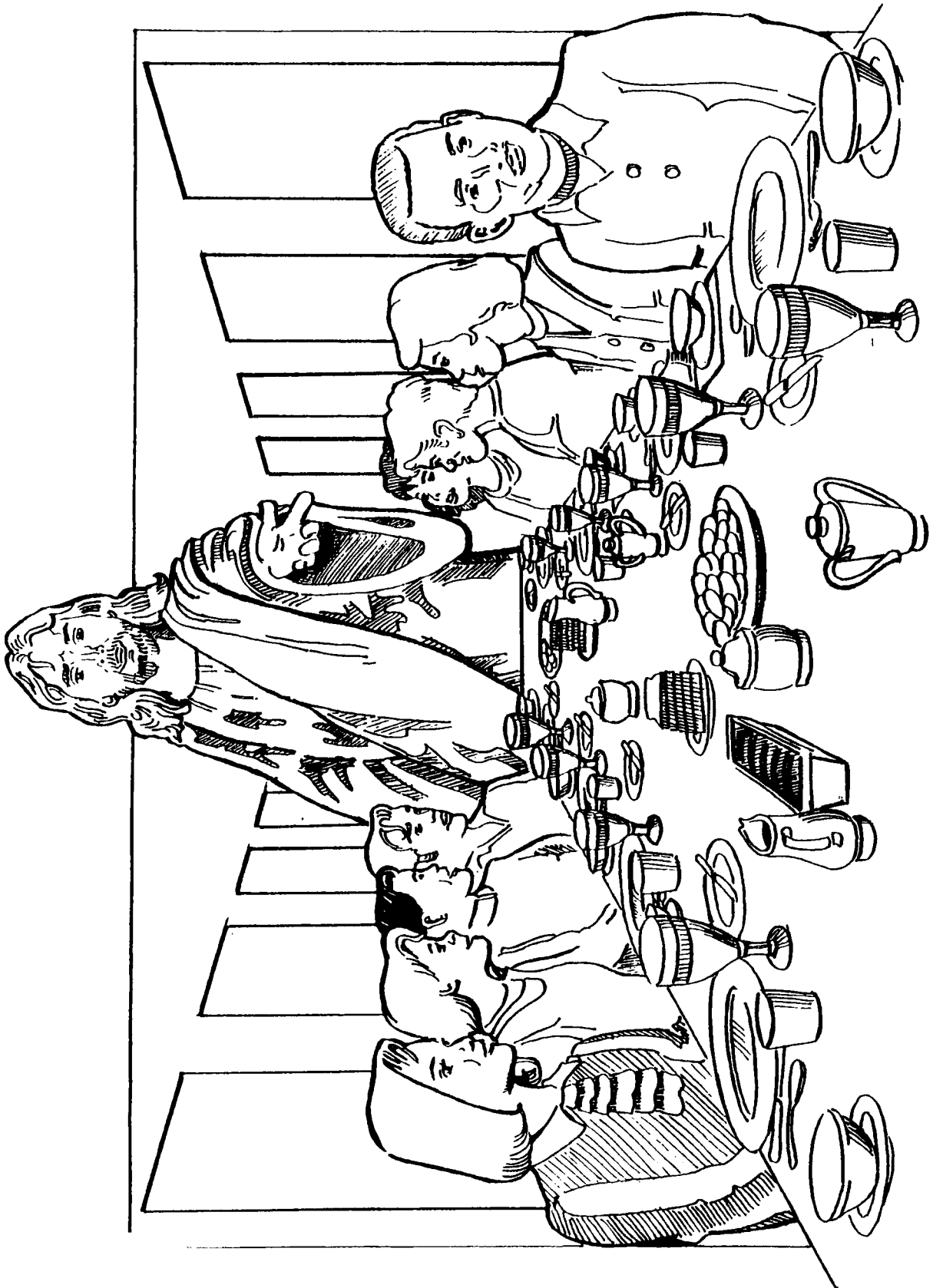
Appendix C: Jesus on the Cross



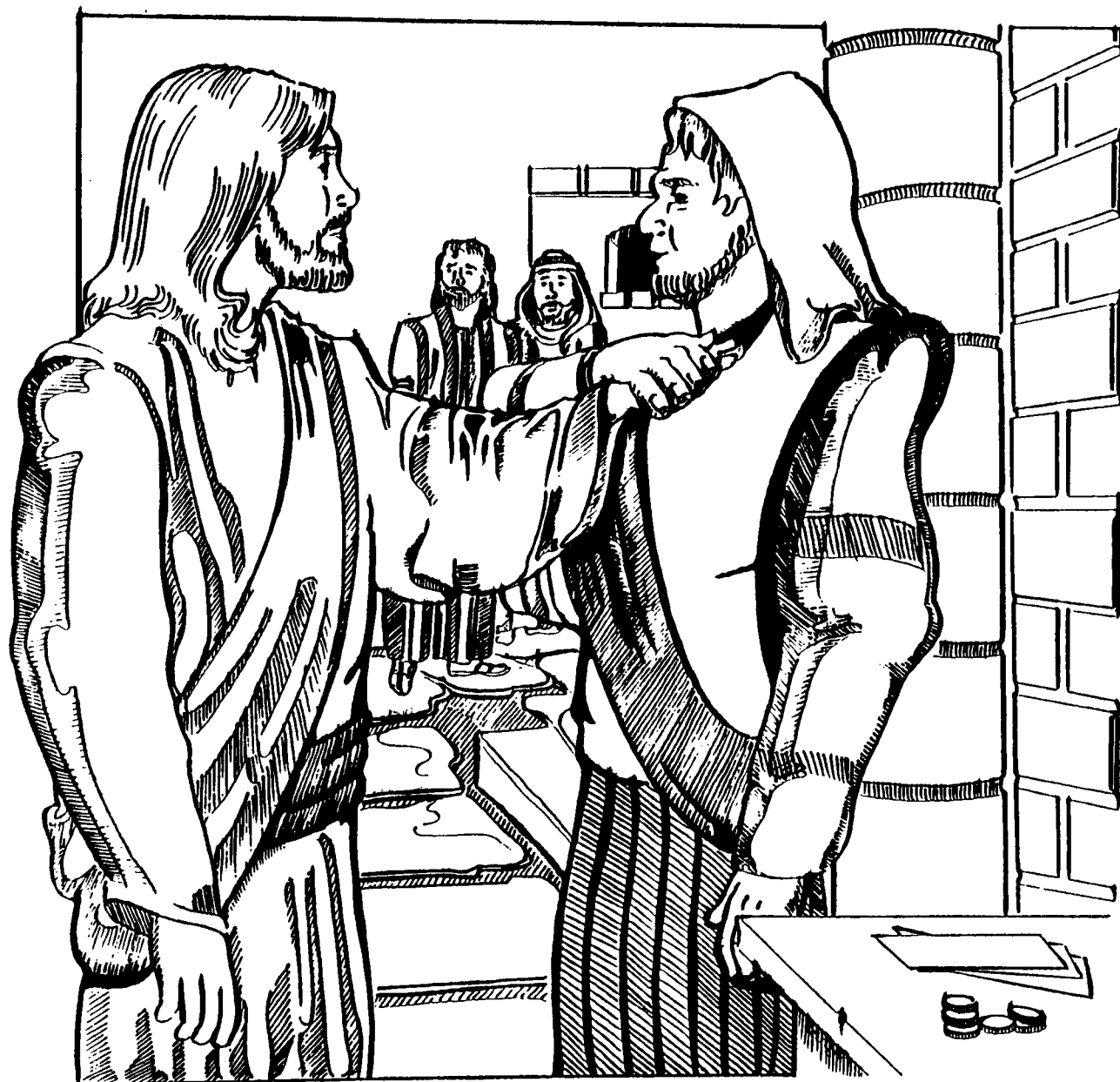
Appendix D: Jesus the Good Shepherd



Appendix E: The Heavenly Feast



Appendix F: Jesus Calling Matthew



Appendix G: Pre-test Comments and Drawings by Children

Name: Adam

Age: 8

Adam's picture about Communion featured two plates on a table with the words "Communion is Love. Jesus Jesus is love" written above. Adam indicated there were people just beyond the picture. The words on the left and right of the picture - yummy and mmm - were spoken by these people. He believed the people were happy and might be thinking that they were glad to be Christians. Adam seemed a bit disappointed in his picture and felt he didn't draw well.

Name: Jamie

Age: 5

Jamie drew a picture of his mom holding the baby (he has a little sister) when she was little. He is also in the picture. She is looking at the baby, saying, "I'm so happy." This makes Jamie happy also.

Name: Michelle

Age: 7

Michelle drew all the people sitting at the table. It was the last supper before Jesus died on the cross. There are knives, forks, plates, and cups on the table and people sitting on the chairs. The person in the picture feels happy but she doesn't know what they might be thinking. The picture makes her feel happy.

Name: Jennifer

Age: 9

Jennifer describes her picture enthusiastically. "Communion is the last supper Jesus had with his disciples and he said the bread was his body and the wine his blood and this is in remembrance of me." The people in

the picture are James, John, Paul and Jesus. There are cups and a loaf of bread. They feel sad because it's the last supper with Jesus. Thinking about it makes Jennifer kind of sad and happy because he died for our sins so we can be forgiven.

Name: Catherine

Age: 12

There is a girl praying to God. She is in a room with a light hanging from the ceiling. She is praying by her bed. The girl is no one specific. She feels happy but Catherine doesn't know what she is thinking. Catherine feels happy too.

Name: Stephanie

Age: 8

Her picture has three girls and a man on the far left with his hair sticking up. Stephanie informs us that the man didn't comb his hair. They are outside on the sidewalk waiting for a car. It is nice outside. They feel fine and are thinking "what's for supper." It makes her feel okay.

Name: Kimberley

Age: 8

Adults are having communion and drinks. Kimberley is beside the table. She then names the other people (people in her church, I believe). "We are about to pray," she states. She is smiling because she is in church and she's happy because she is having the Lord's Supper.

Name: Katie

Age: 8

Grade: 3

Katie is in the picture talking about 'God is special.' She is telling God he

is special. She feels happy for him. She feels good that he is our God. God feels nice and likes us a lot.

Name: Jennifer

Age: 10

Grade: 5

A person is praying and thinking about God. When asked if this was any special time Jennifer said, "no." There was bread and juice on the table. Jennifer was then asked if this was Communion to which she replied, "yes." The person in the picture is thanking God for creating her. The picture makes Jennifer happy.

Name: Hannah

Age: 9

Grade: 4

This is a picture of heaven. "When I have Communion I think of heaven." Hannah said. In the top right hand corner is the Book of Life Hall. Hannah mentioned this was something she picked up in her Sunday School class. She was asked if there are people in heaven. She said yes there are and they feel happy. Hannah feels happy when she takes Communion.

Name: Becky

Age: 10

Grade: 5

Becky's picture is of someone praying at the altar. It is no one specific (she did say that it started out to be she but she wasn't pleased with the drawing so it just became someone). This person is at Communion. She feels happy and is thinking 'I need wisdom from God.' Becky feels happy and peaceful at the Lord's Supper.

Name: Jared

Age: 6

Grade: 1

This is a picture of Jared and Jesus. Jesus is the one on the right. They are standing beside each other. Both of them are happy.

Name: Justin

Age: 7

Grade: 2

This a picture of Jesus and he's praying. He feels happy. He's praying "Lord, please help me."

Name: Michelle

Age: 7

Grade: 2

Michelle was thinking about God when taking the Lord's Supper. God is telling her that he is God. Michelle feels happy. God feels happy.

Name: Brittany

Age: 6

Grade: 1

This is a picture of the church. Nothing is happening. Brittany feels happy about church. The interviewer said, "We had Communion today. Is that something we do at church?" Brittany replied, "Yes." Then she was asked if she knew what Communion was about and she replied, "No."

Name: Sarah

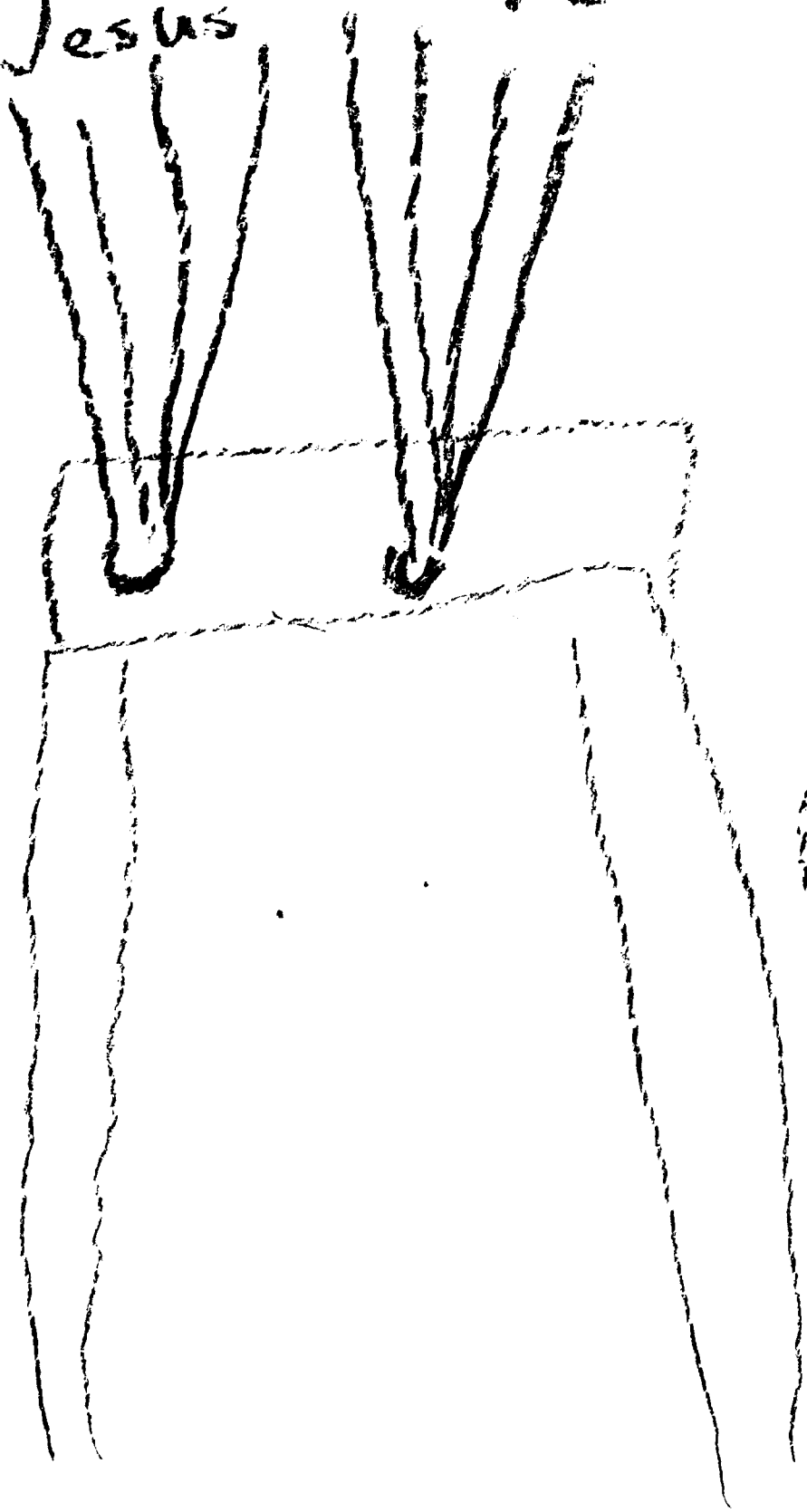
Age: 11

Grade: 6

This is Jesus and his disciples. He's giving them wine to drink and bread to eat. They feel honoured and amazed. They are probably saying or thinking that Jesus is nice; he's a great guy. It makes her feel honoured.

Communion is
Love Jesus
Love

Jesus

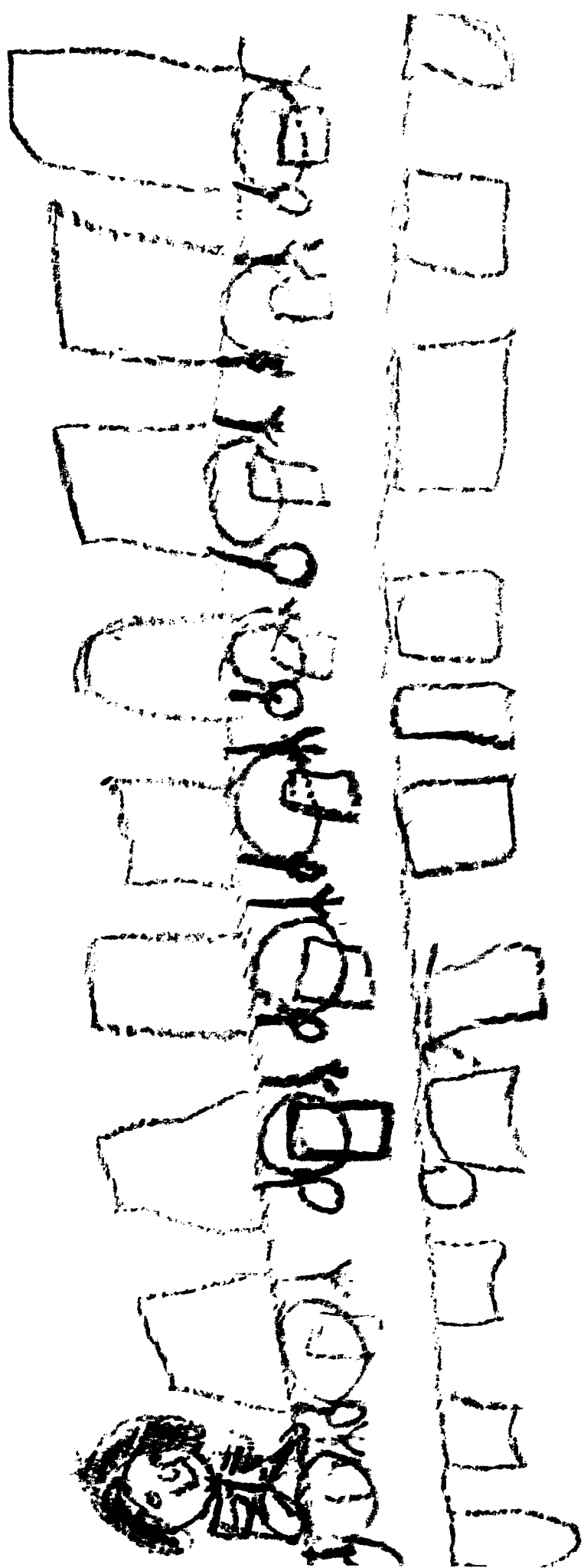


MMN

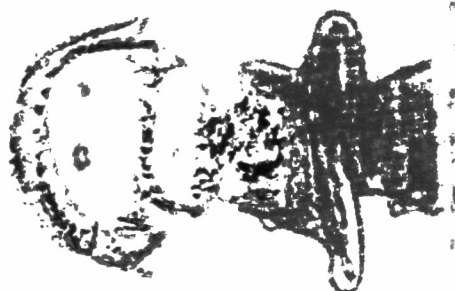
Jamie



JAMIE S.

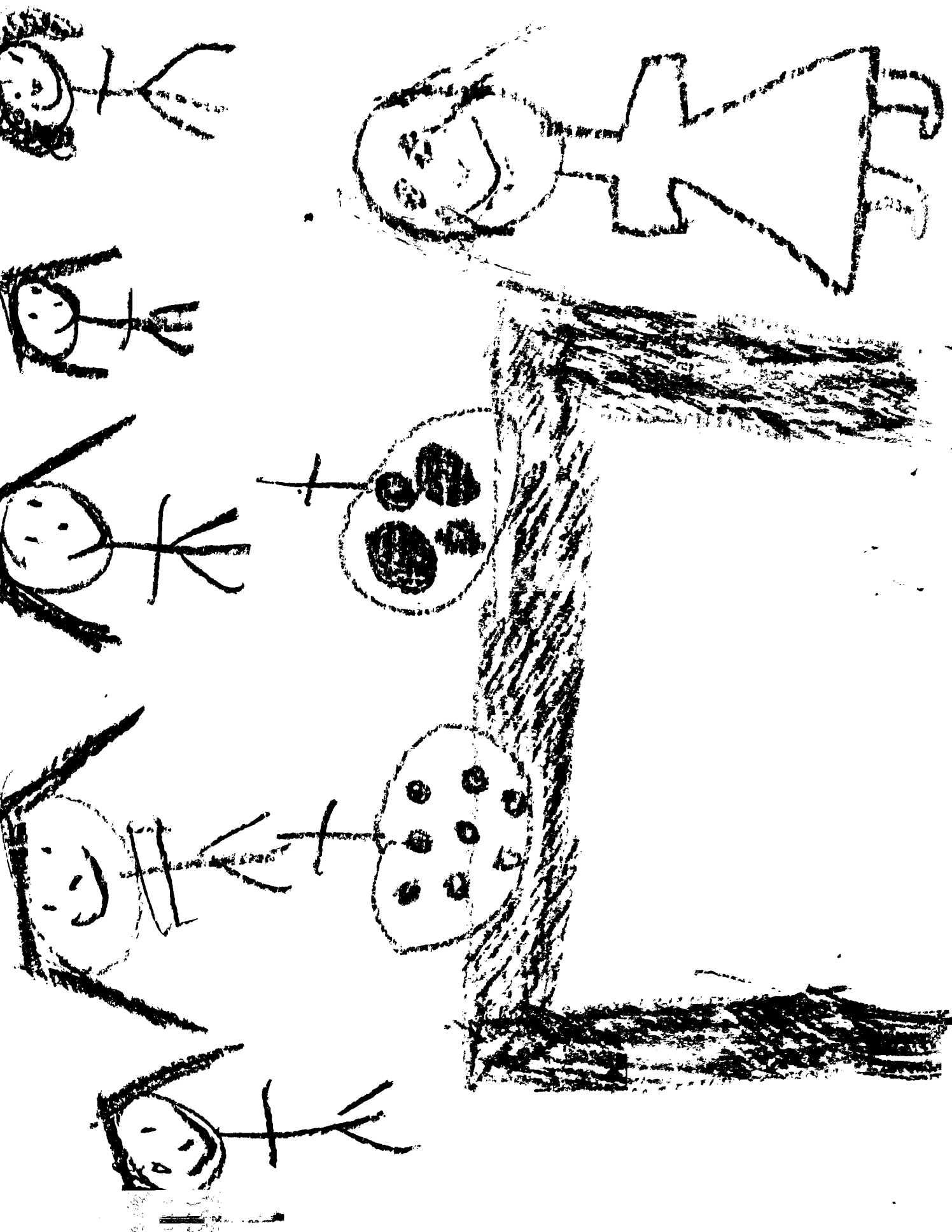


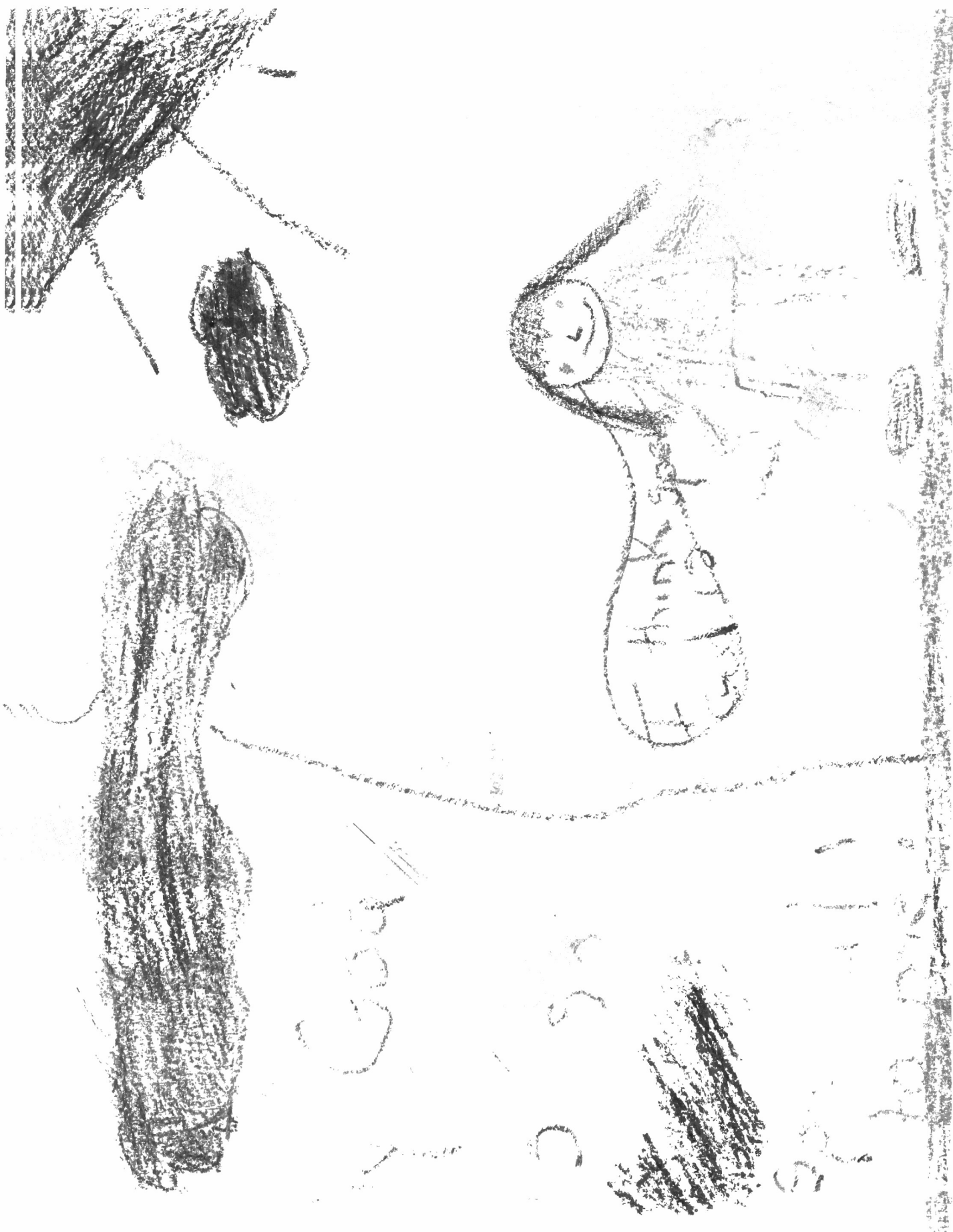
Michelle G



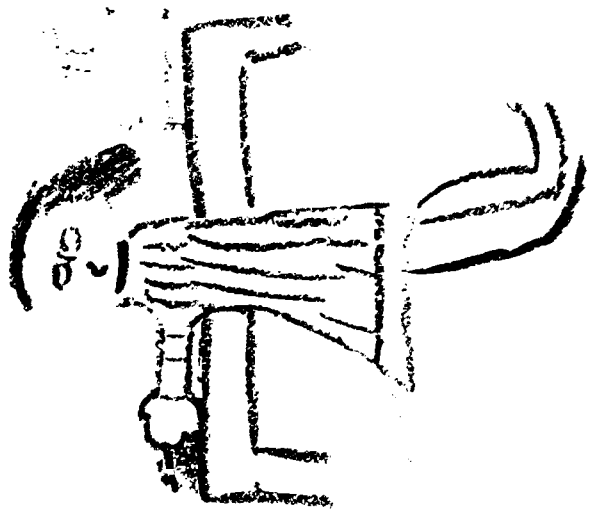


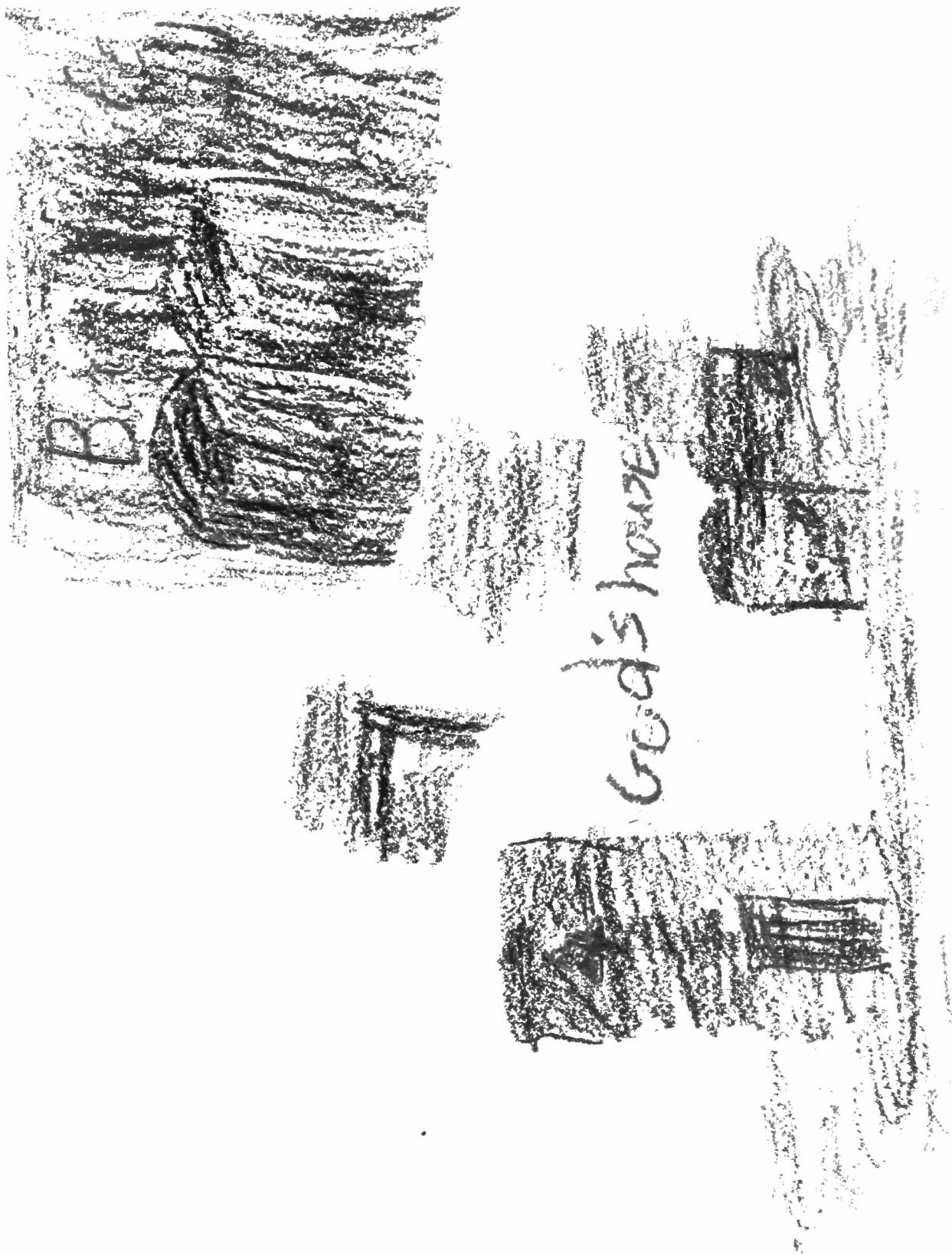




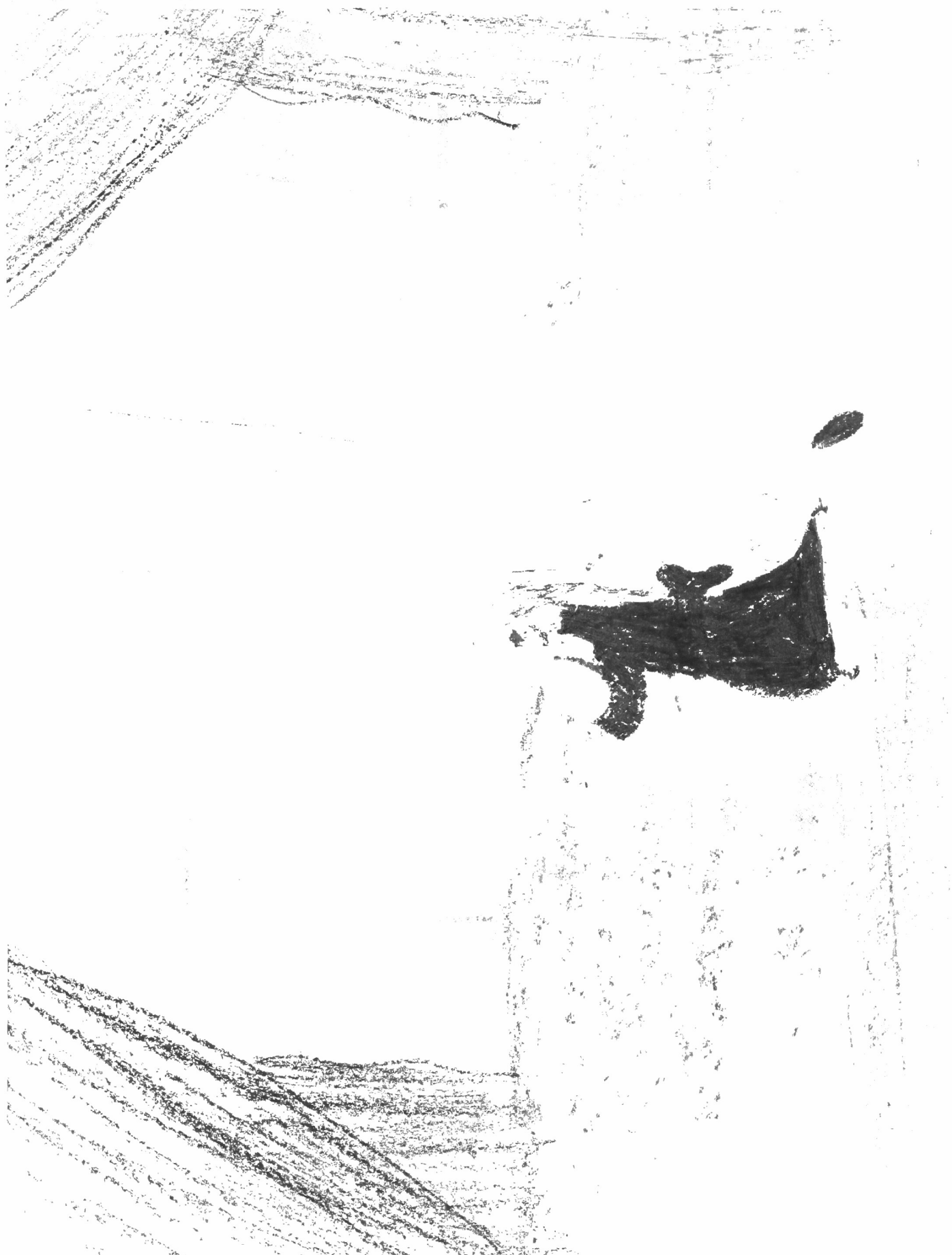


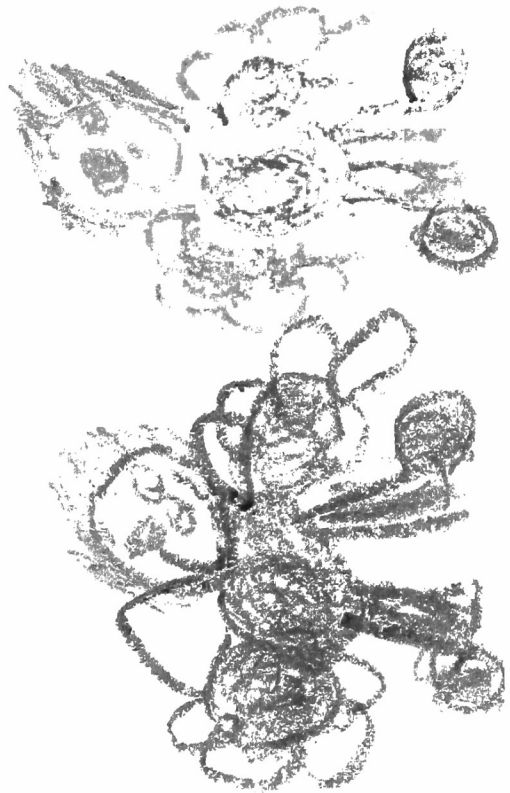
J.B.

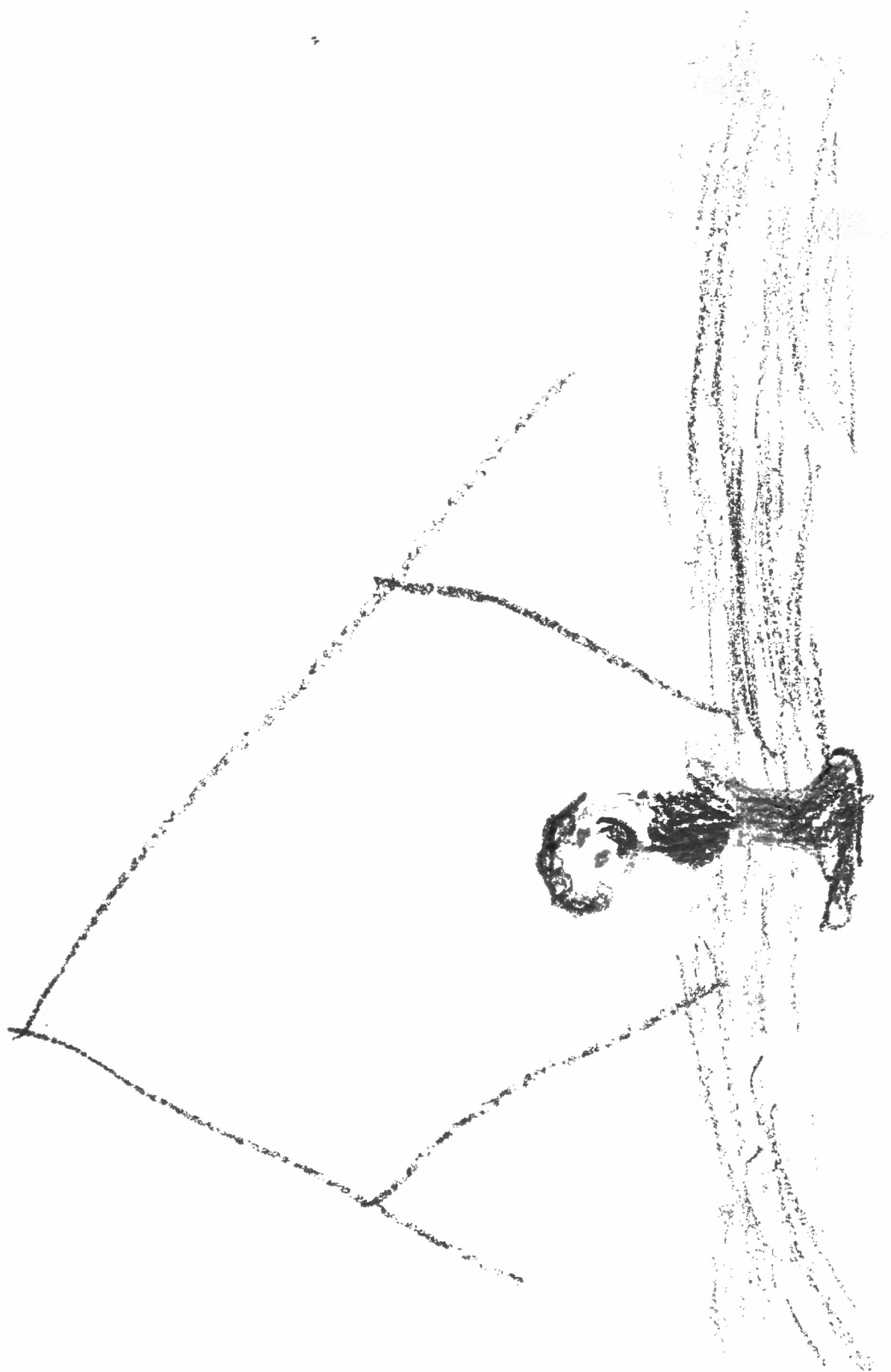


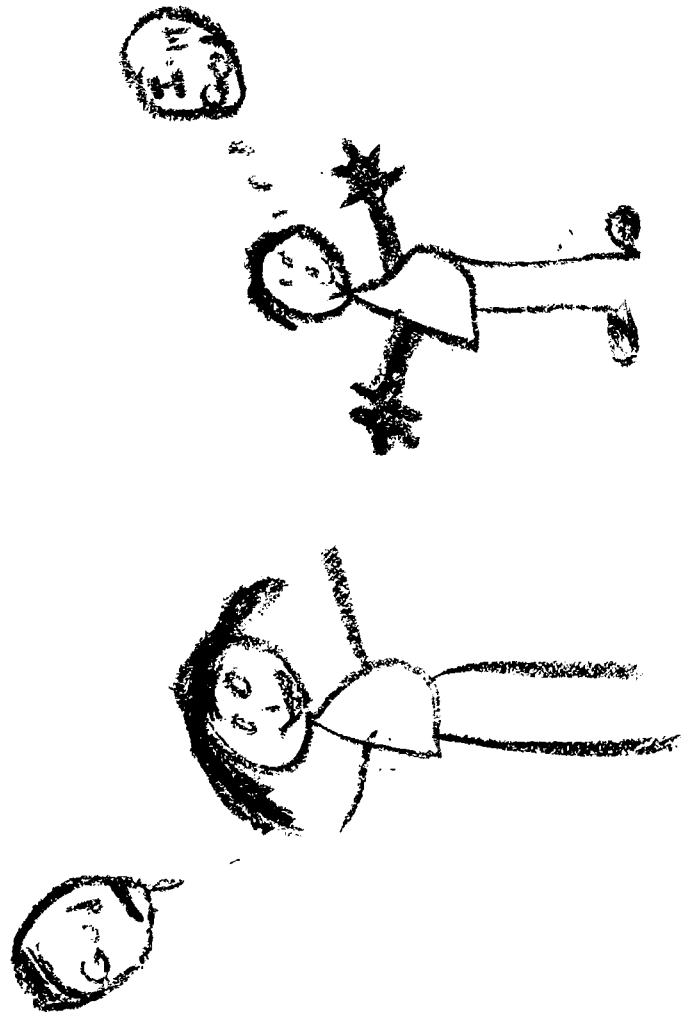


Becky

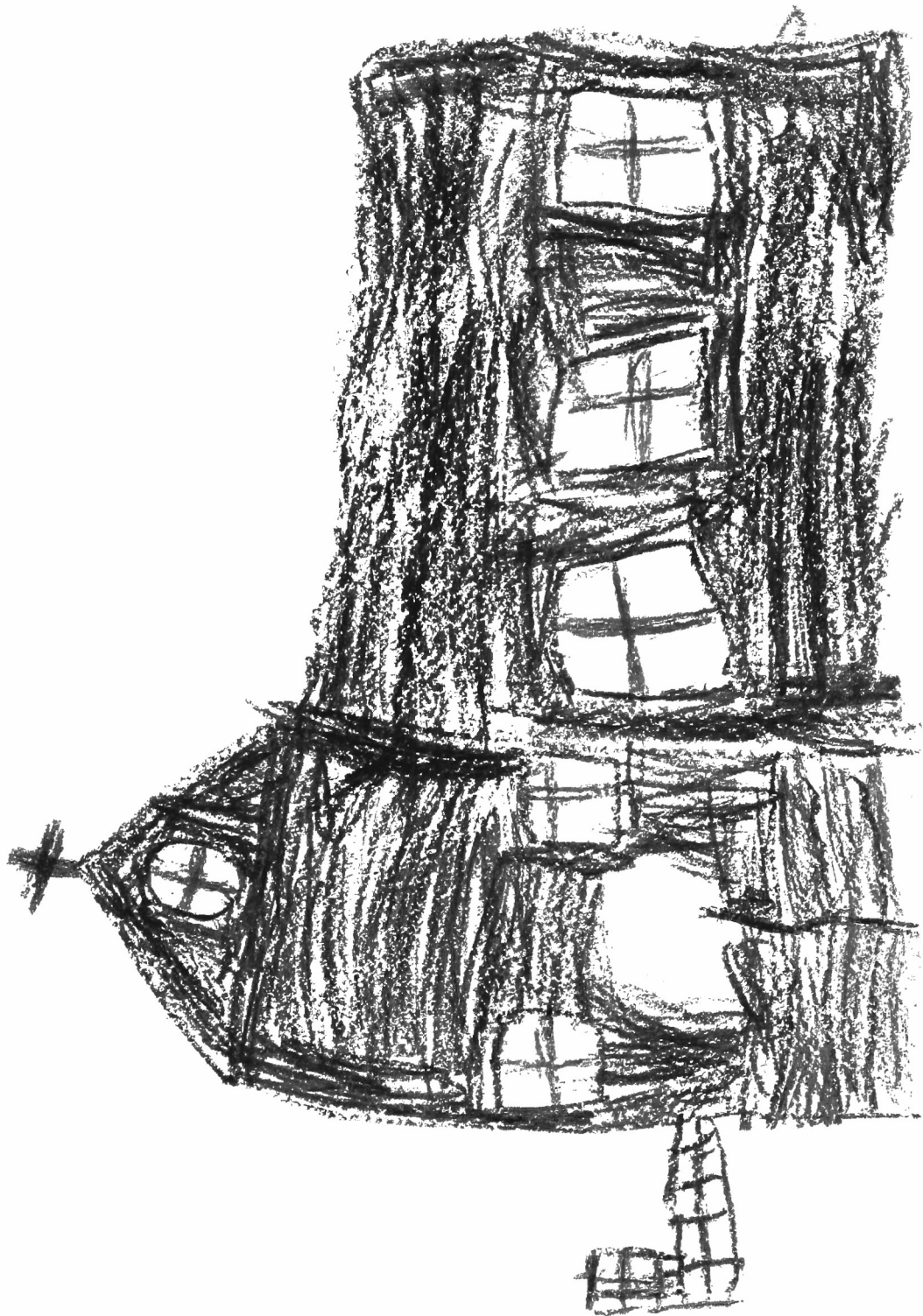


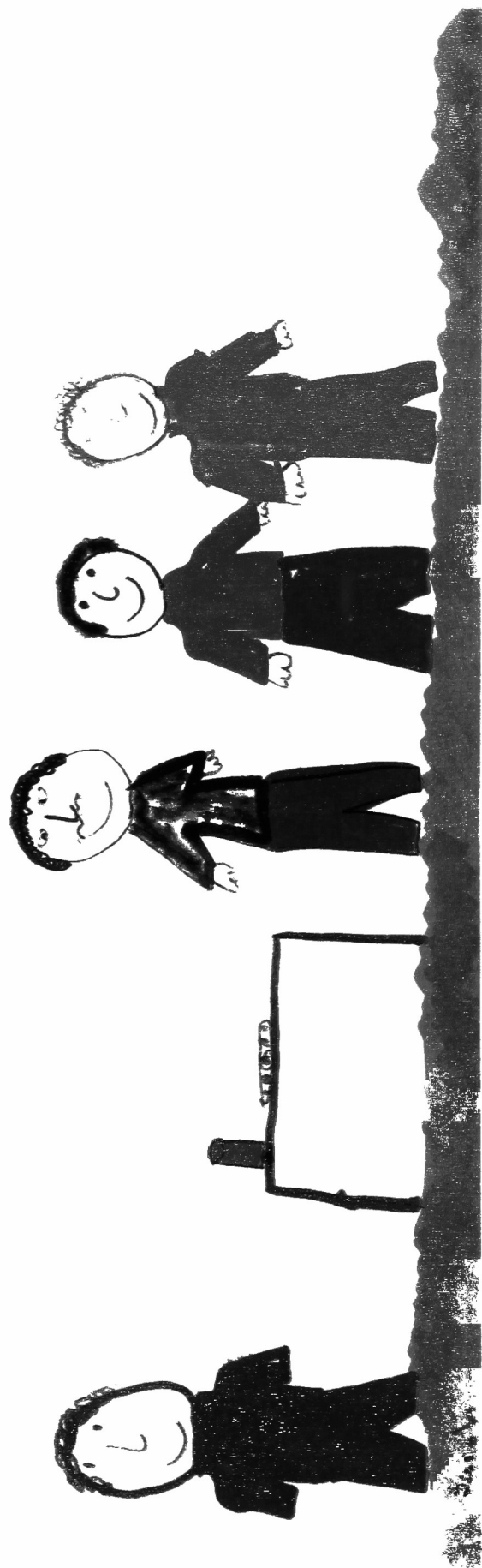






Brittany





Appendix H: Post-test Comments and Drawings by Children

Name: Adam

Age: 8

Jesus is sitting at the table with bread and juice beside him. On the other side is a picture of Jesus on the cross and in the sky there is a star (this drawing was done at the beginning of the advent season).

Adam was asked who else he would have included if he had drawn others.

He replied, "Disciples." He believed both the disciples and Jesus would have been happy. Jesus is probably saying grace before they eat the Last Supper. To think of the Last Supper made Adam feel happy.

Name: Jamie

Age: 5

Jamie drew a communion table with the bread and cup. He was asked about people and stated he forgot to include them. He was then asked who he would have drawn if he had drawn people. Jamie replied, "Jesus' disciples and Jesus."

Name: Michelle

Age: 7

Jesus is handing out the bread and drink - water or whatever it was.

Michelle didn't remember exactly what the drink was. Jesus feels happy doing this. Michelle is happy when she thinks about this.

Name: Jennifer

Age: 9

Jesus is eating the passover. James and John are also pictured. She has drawn the bread and the juice. (She described more but I could not understand it on the tape.) The disciples feel both good and bad. They feel bad because it's their last supper with Jesus. They feel good to be

eating supper with Jesus. Jennifer also feels good and bad. She feels bad because he'll be dying on the cross. He's dying to forgive our sins. She feels good that they are having supper with Jesus.

Name: Catherine

Age: 12

(Some of this was missed because of tape quality) There are people in the picture and pictures on the wall. A light is hanging down. She is asked if the people on the left are all lined up. I cannot make out her answer. The people feel happy and so does Catherine.

While some of the important details could not be understood from the tape, the illustration seems to depict a Communion service or a meal. There appears to be bread and drink on the table and cups stacked up.

Name: Stephanie

Age: 8

People are getting ready for supper. The man is saying, "I don't know when supper is." There is a girl up high in the picture - Stephanie. The green thing is a fan. On the table is the bread. Stephanie indicates that she forgot to make the juice. The people are Jesus, the Lord, and God. They feel fine and it makes her feel good.

Name: Kimberley

Age: 8

People are having Communion in this picture. The pastor's desk is at the back (perhaps she is referring to the pulpit). Bread (on the right) and juice (on the left) are on the table. The people are Kimberley and her sister. The red at the top is the pews. There are crosses on top of the bread and the juice (I wondered if there were crosses on top of their

Communion set). They feel happy in the picture. Kimberley stated that she was praying.

Name: Katie

Age: 8

Grade: 3

Katie stated that she drew a picture of the Lord's Supper. She has written that at the top. She drew this because it is important to her and she thinks of it a lot. The people are Katie and someone else. They are thinking about the Lord's Supper and praying. They are thinking how God had his last supper and how good he wanted it to be for them. Katie feels sort of good and sort of bad. She feels bad because it was the last supper and they wanted to be together.

Name: Jennifer

Age: 10

Grade: 5

Jesus is walking down the road. He feels happy and is thinking about everybody. This makes Jennifer feel happy.

Name: Hannah

Age: 9

Grade: 4

This is a picture of God the Father, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Ghost all saying "I love you" to Hannah. She is saying "I love you too." They are telling her this at Communion. Hannah mentioned that at Communion she usually thinks about them and remembers that they love her. This makes her feel happy. (Later, I explained to her that the Holy Ghost and the Holy Spirit were the same person.)

Name: Becky

Age: 10

Grade: 5

Jesus is dying for our sins on the cross, on Calvary. He feels sad and

happy. He is happy he could die for our sins but he's sad because he's suffering. Becky stated "I'm glad it happened cause if he didn't there would be no hope."

Name: Jared

Age: 6

Grade: 1

Jared and Jesus are holding hands. This makes Jared feel good. He likes Jesus near. He thinks Jesus feels good and happy.

Name: Justin

Age: 7

Grade: 2

Jesus is dying on the cross. The soldiers are laughing at him. Jesus feels sad cause they are laughing at him. It makes Justin sad, too.

Name: Michelle

Age: 7

Grade: 2

People are crying because Jesus is dying on the cross. They are sad because he is dying and they love him. This makes Michelle feel pretty sad.

Name: Brittany

Age: 6

Grade: 1

This is a picture of Jesus. Brittany isn't sure what he might be doing. She feels happy when she thinks of Jesus.

Name: Sarah

Age: 11

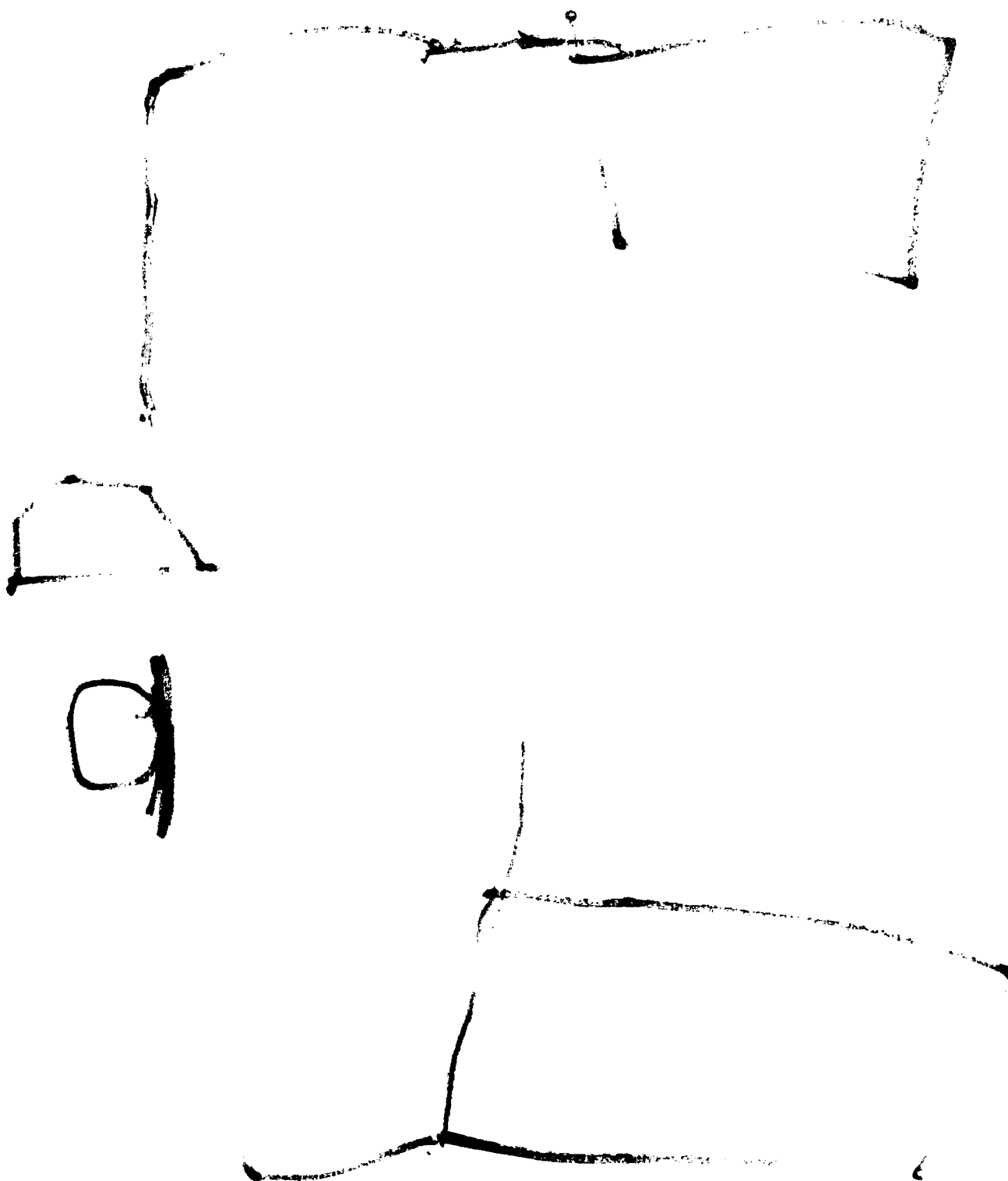
Grade: 6

It is a picture of Jesus on the cross. He feels a bit happy and a bit sad. He is sad because he had to die for our sins because we were bad. He's happy because he knows he'll rise again.



Jamie

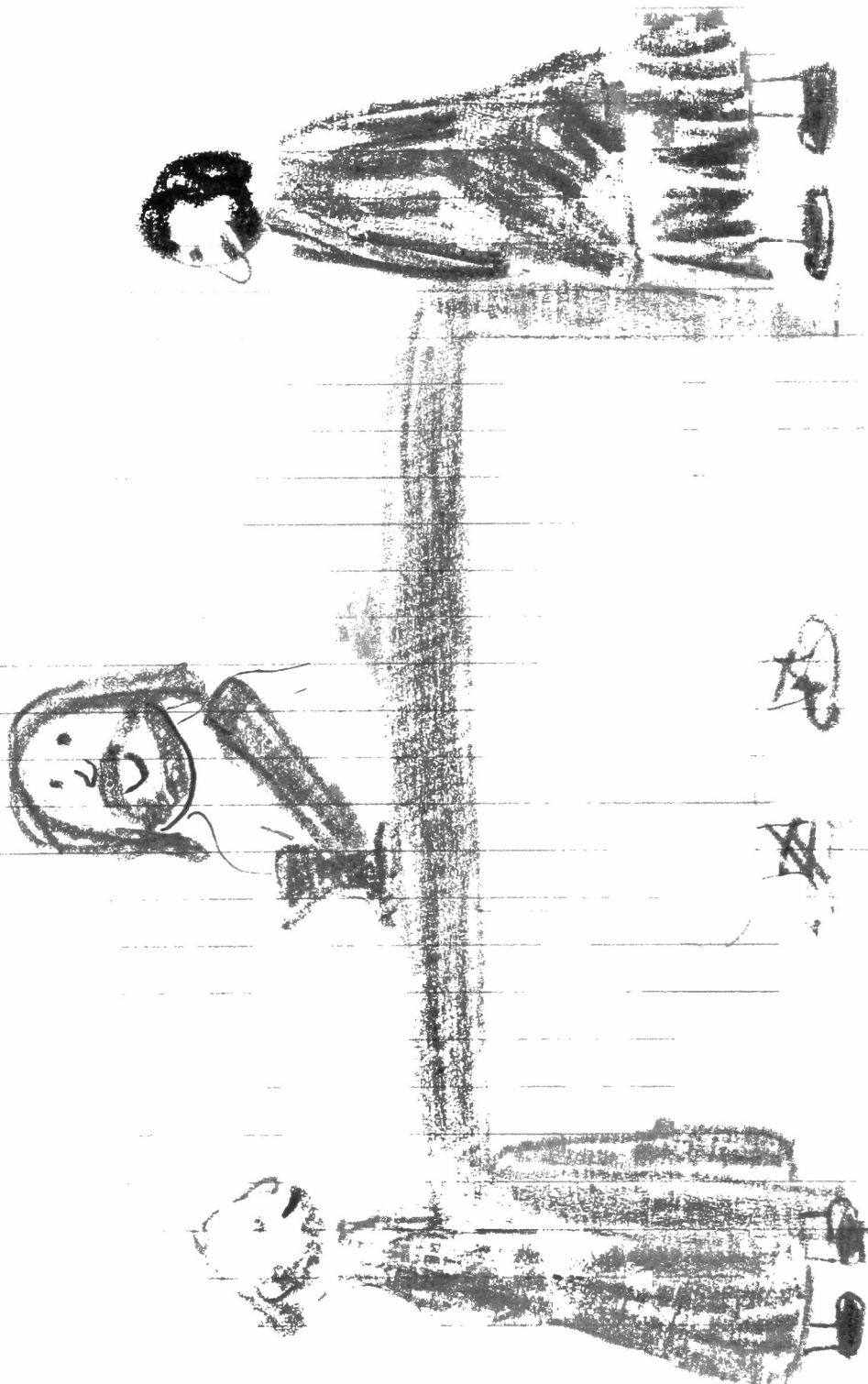
Jamie Shaw

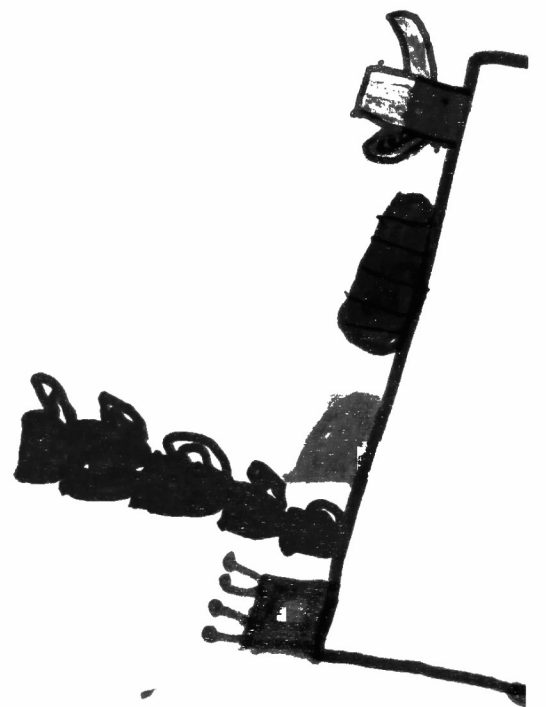




Jennifer G

Jennifer Gishue





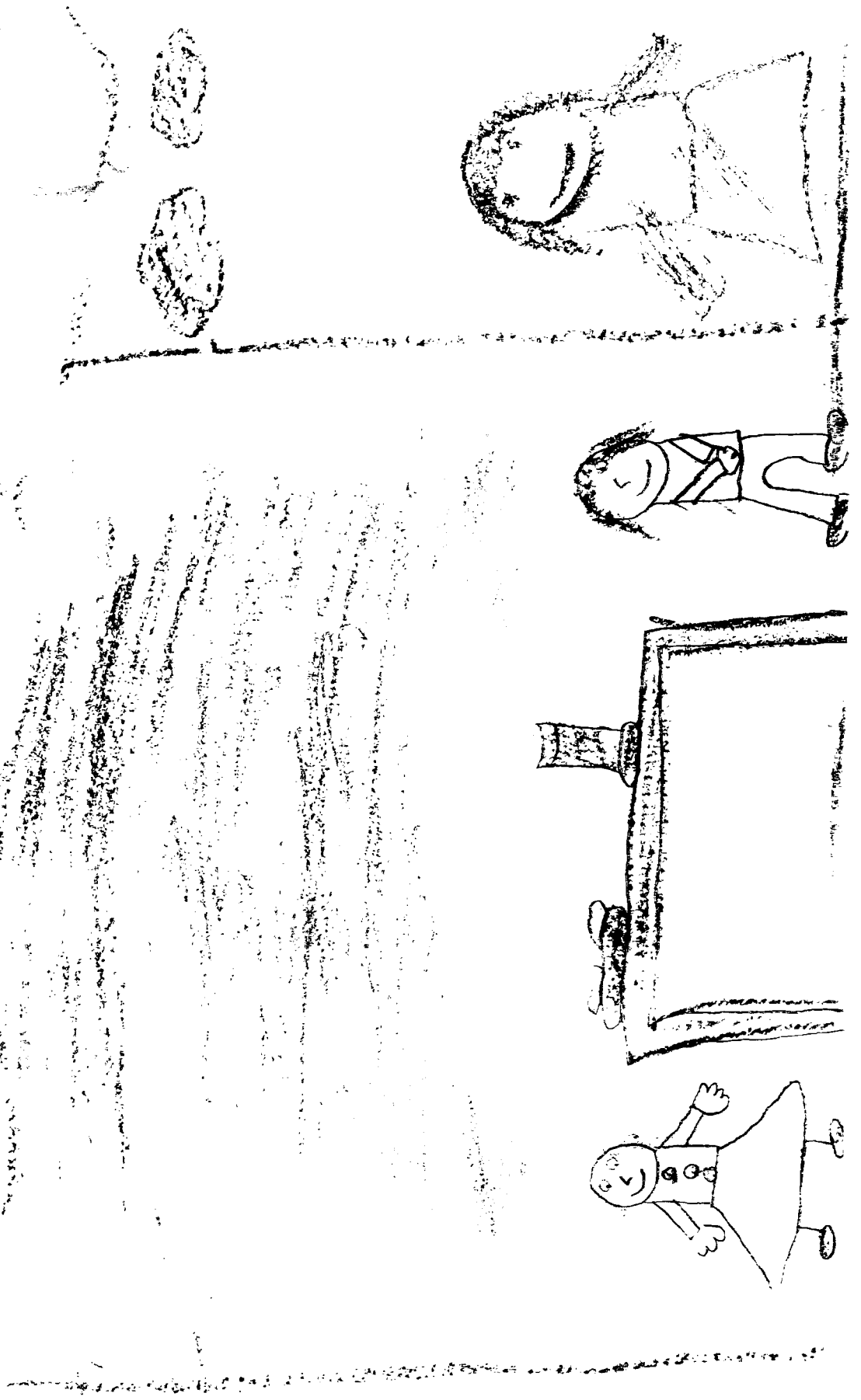


Kimberly

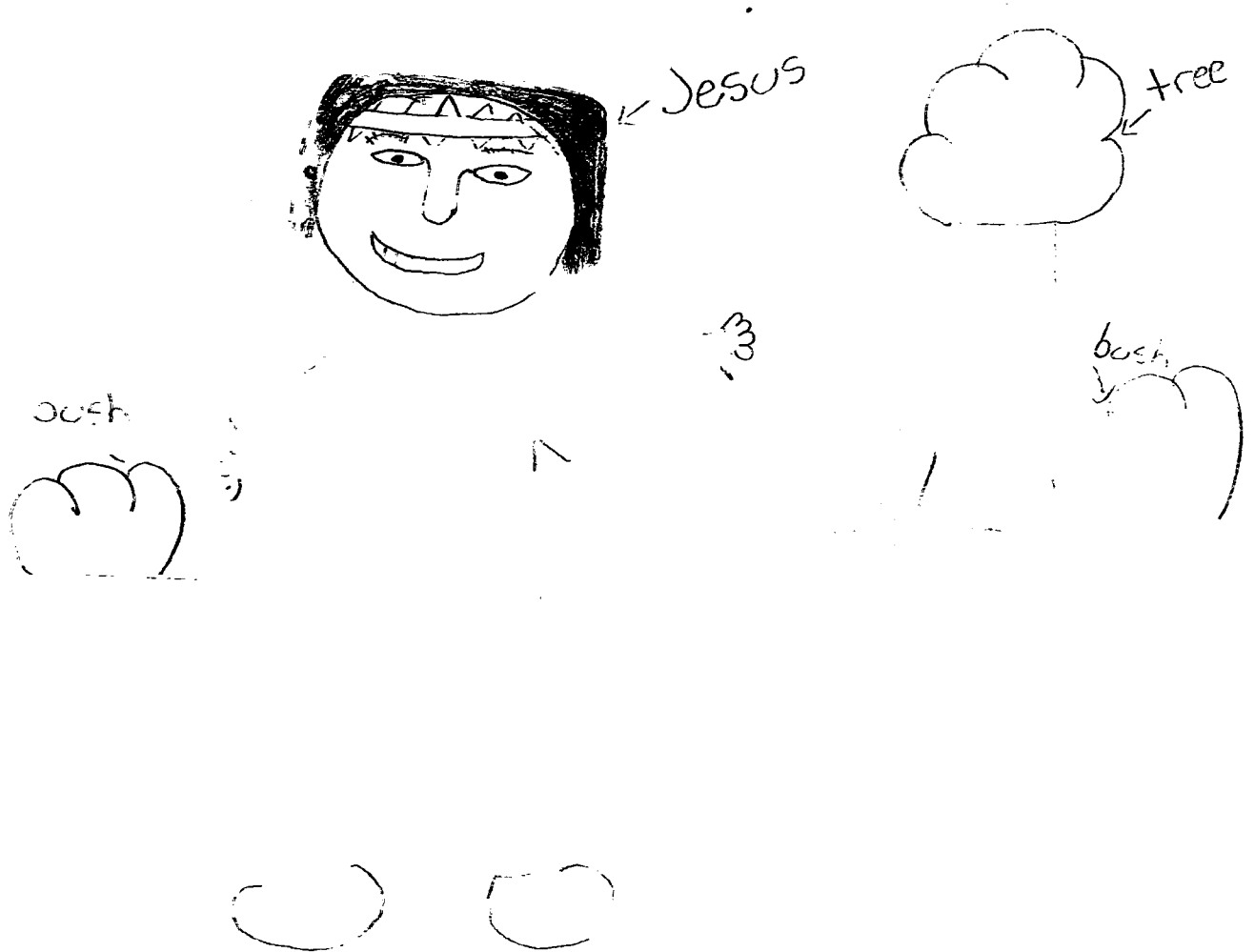
Kimberly Kimberly



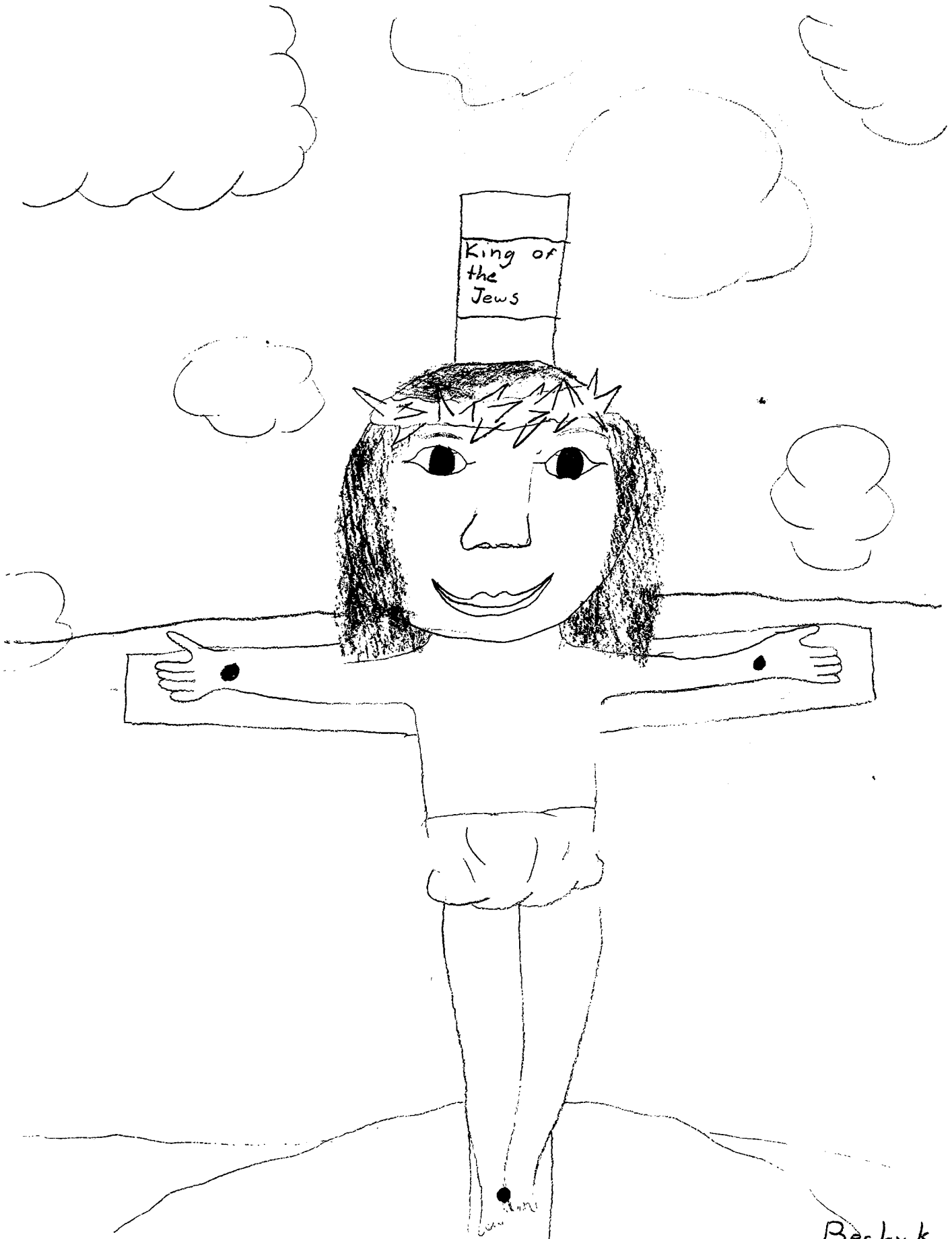
The Lord



Va. Rose

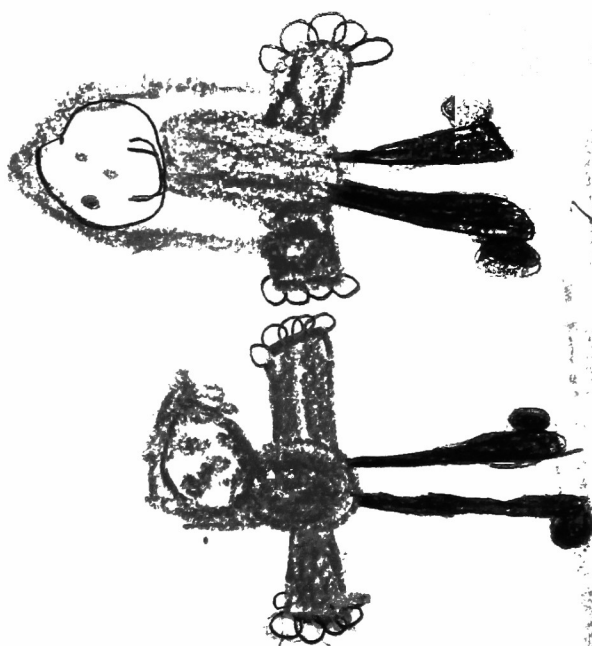


Becky

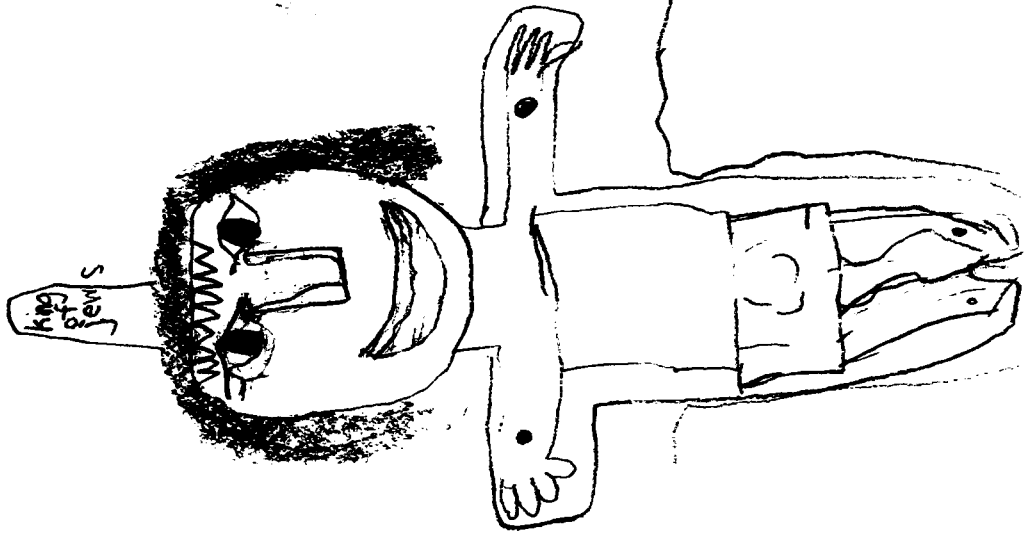
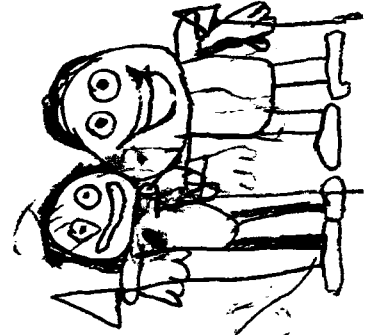
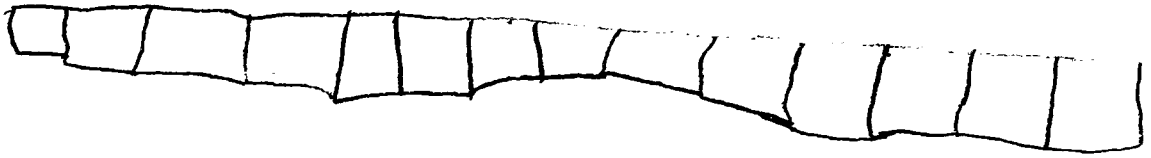


Becky.k

JARED



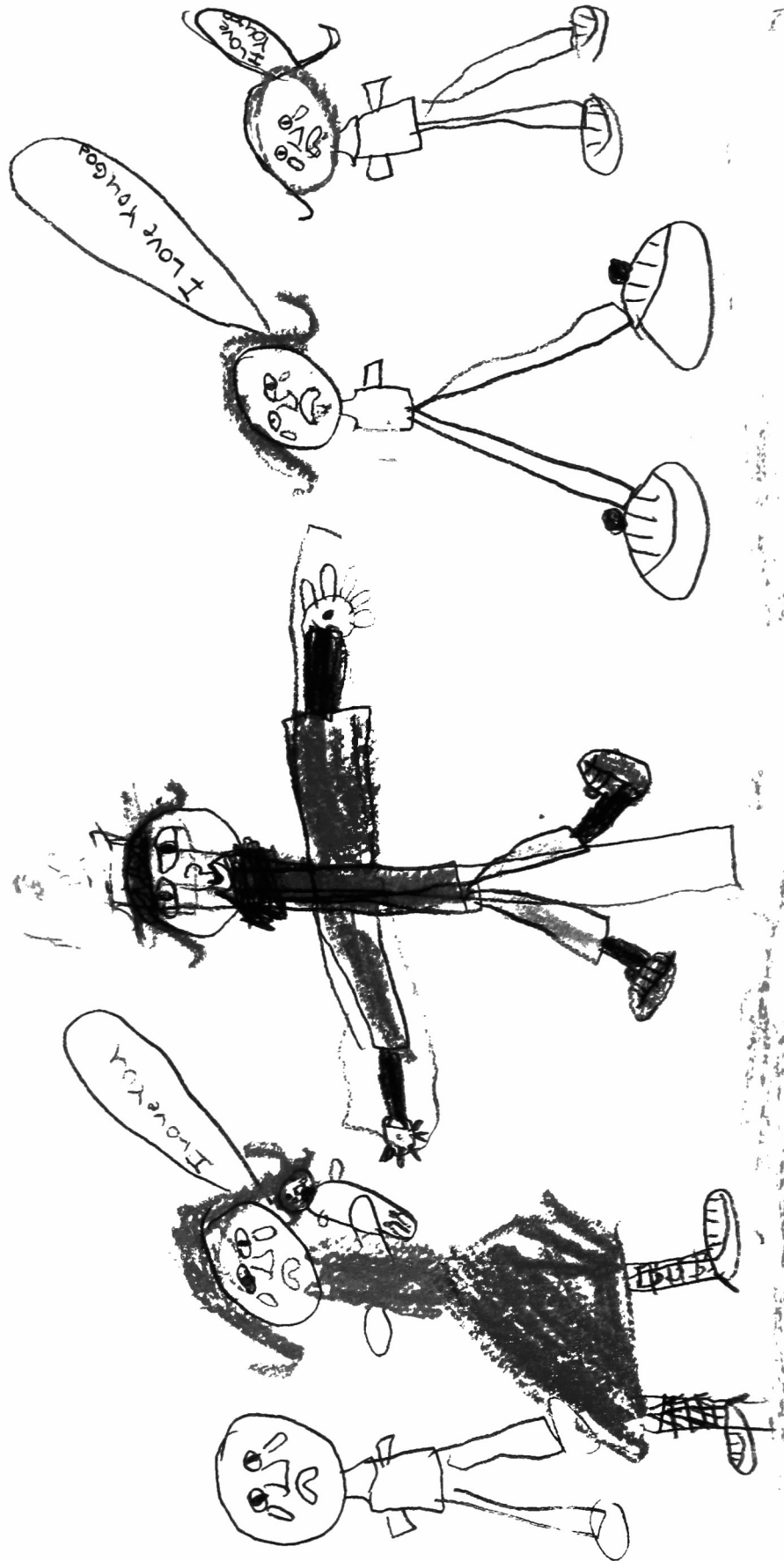
Justin



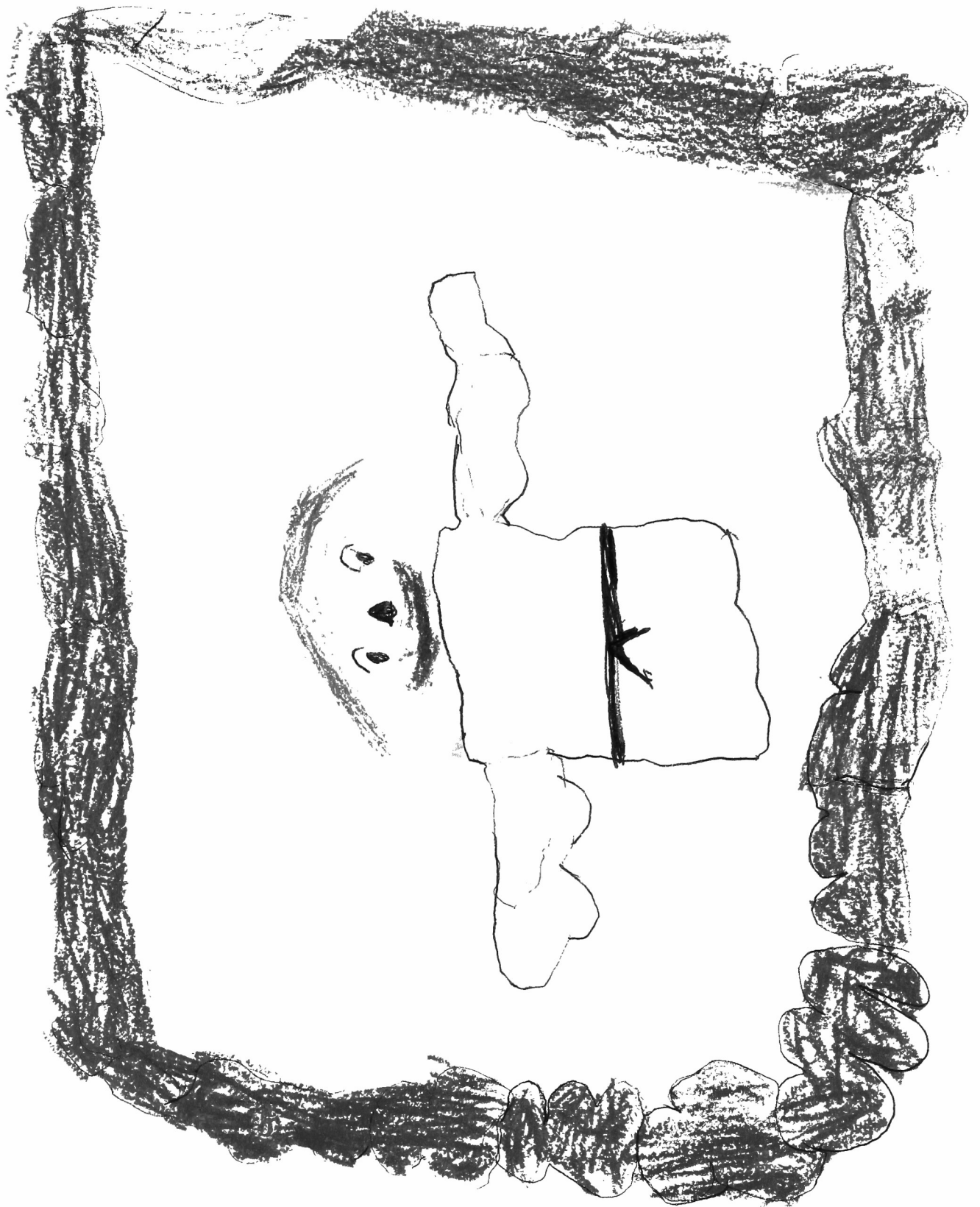
Justin

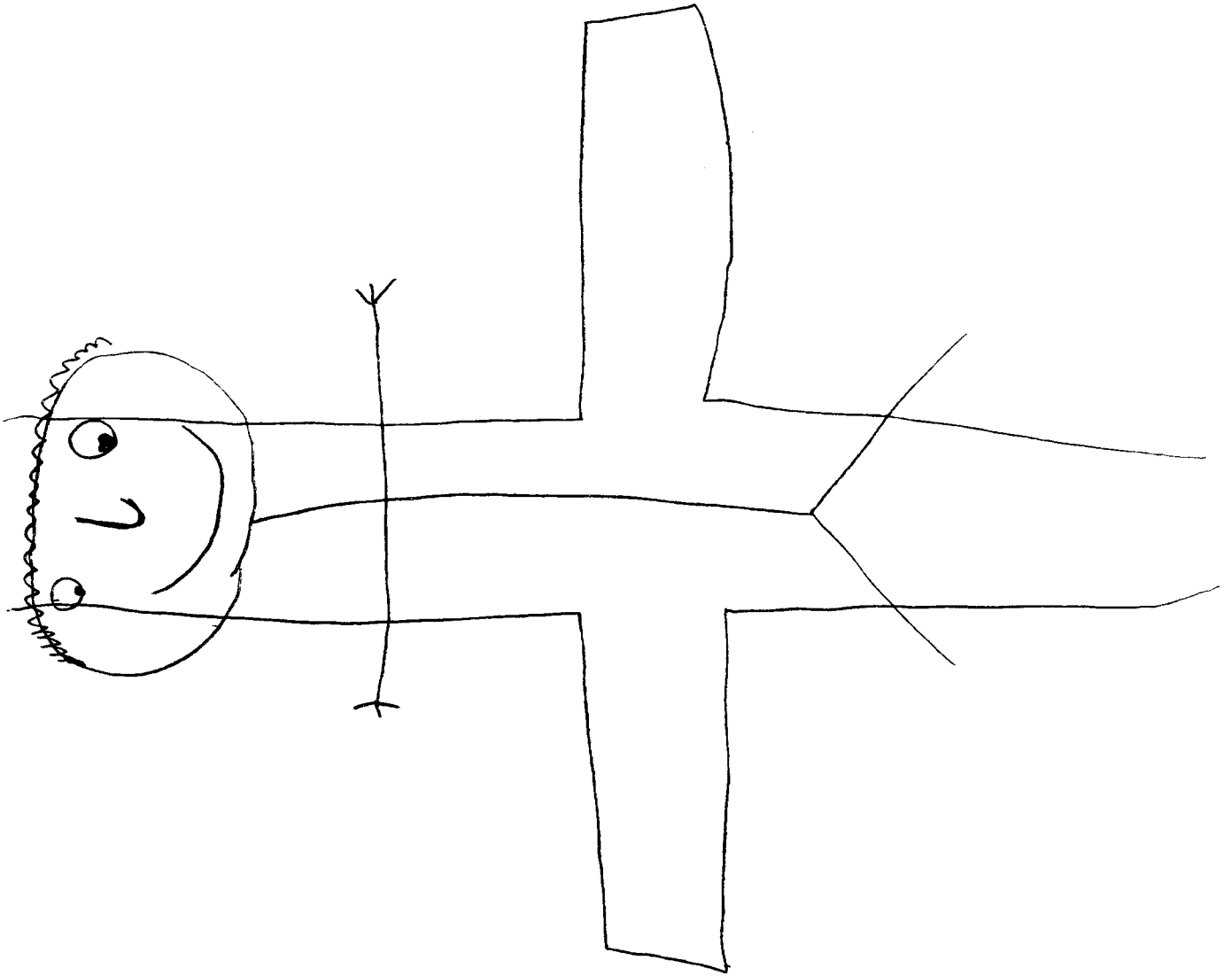
Justin

Justin



Brittany





Appendix I - Lord's Supper Surveys

A. Canada Great Lakes Conference

1. How often do you serve the Lord's Supper in your church?

a) less than four times per year	0	0%
b) four times per year	4	16%
c) four to eight times per year	10	40%
d) eight to twelve times per year	10	40%
e) more than twelve times per year	1	4%
2. Would you prefer to serve Communion

a) more often	3	12%
b) less frequently	0	0%
c) same as at present	22	88%
3. In your opinion would your congregation prefer to have Communion

a) more often	2	8%
b) less frequently	0	0%
c) same as at present	20	80%
d) unsure	1	4%
4. Which of the following reflect your beliefs regarding the Lord's Supper? (check all that apply)

a) It is a memorial of Christ's death	21	84%
b) It is a means of grace	22	88%
c) It is a pledge of heaven	3.5	14%
d) It is a converting grace	7.5	30%
e) It is a confirming grace	18	72%
f) Christ is really present in the Sacrament	9	36%
5. In your opinion which of the following reflect the beliefs of the congregation you serve regarding the Lord's Supper? (check all that apply)

a) It is a memorial of Christ's death	24	96%
b) It is a means of grace	18	72%
c) It is a pledge of heaven	1	4%
d) It is a converting grace	4.5	18%
e) It is a confirming grace	13.5	54%
f) Christ is really present in the Sacrament	4	16%
6. With respect to Communion what specific teaching methods are used with children in your congregation? (Check all that apply)

a) Children's moments talk during worship	16	64%
b) Teaching from their parents	16	64%
c) Separate instruction from the pastor	7	28%
d) Teaching in children's church	7	28%
e) Teaching in our midweek program	2	8%
f) No special teaching	2	8%
7. Do children partake of the Lord's Supper in your congregation?

a) Yes	23	92%
b) No	2	8%

8. At what age do children in your congregation begin to partake of the Lord's Supper?

a) Under 5	8	32%
b) Ages 6-8	9	36%
c) Ages 9-11	6	24%
d) Ages 12-15	2	8%
e) Age 16 and older	0	0%

B. Canada East Conference

1. How often do you serve the Lord's Supper in your church?
- | | | |
|------------------------------------|----|------|
| a) less than four times per year | 0 | 0 % |
| b) four times per year | 7 | 16 % |
| c) five to eight times per year | 18 | 42 % |
| d) nine to twelve times per year | 9 | 21 % |
| e) more than twelve times per year | 9 | 21 % |
2. Would you prefer to serve Communion
- | | | |
|-----------------------|----|------|
| a) more often | 22 | 51 % |
| b) less frequently | 0 | 0 % |
| c) same as at present | 21 | 49 % |
3. During your ministry have you intentionally changed the frequency with which you scheduled Communion each year?
- | | | |
|--------------|----|------|
| a) Increased | 27 | 63 % |
| b) Decreased | 1 | 2 % |
| c) No change | 15 | 35 % |
- If yes please share the reasons for the change.
-

4. In your opinion would your congregation prefer to have Communion
- | | | |
|-----------------------|----|------|
| a) more often | 15 | 35 % |
| b) less frequently | 1 | 2 % |
| c) same as at present | 26 | 60 % |

5. Which of the following reflect your beliefs regarding the Lord's Supper? (check all that apply)
- | | | |
|--|----|------|
| a) It is a memorial of Christ's death | 36 | 84 % |
| b) It is a means of grace | 38 | 88 % |
| c) It is a pledge of heaven | 12 | 28 % |
| d) It is a converting grace | 20 | 46 % |
| e) It is a confirming grace | 30 | 70 % |
| f) Christ is really present in the Sacrament | 19 | 44 % |

6. Do you give advance announcement of Communion?
- | | | |
|---------------------|----|------|
| a) Yes | 41 | 95 % |
| Church Calendar | 25 | 58 % |
| Bulletin | 33 | 77 % |
| Pulpit Announcement | 28 | 65 % |
| b) No | 2 | 5 % |

7. Are people in your congregation encouraged to make any preparations for Communion?

- | | | |
|--------|----|------|
| a) Yes | 24 | 56 % |
| b) No | 19 | 44 % |

If yes, describe what they are generally told.

If yes, do you provide anything for them to use in preparation.

8. How often have you taught/preached on the meaning and purpose of Communion in the past year?

a) Not at all	4	9 %
b) Once	10	23 %
c) Two to four times	19	44 %
d) More than four times	10	23 %

9. Do children partake of the Lord's Supper in your congregation?

a) Yes	39	91 %
b) No	4	9 %

10. At what age are children in your congregation permitted to partake of the Lord's Supper?

a) Under 5	18	42 %
b) Ages 6-8	6	14 %
c) Ages 9-11	6	14 %
d) Ages 12-15	2	5 %
e) Age 16 and older	0	0 %
f) Parental Discretion	8	19 %

11. With respect to Communion what specific teaching methods are used with children in your congregation? (Check all that apply)

a) Children's moments talk during worship	26	60 %
b) Teaching from their parents	22	51 %
c) Separate instruction from the pastor	10	23 %
d) Teaching in children's church	13	30 %
e) Teaching in our midweek program	4	9 %
f) No special teaching	6	14 %

Age

a) 20-29	0	0%
b) 30-39	18	42 %
c) 40-49	14	33 %
d) 50-64	8	19 %
e) 65+	2	5 %

Years of pastoral ministry

a) 0-5	6	14 %
b) 6-10	13	30 %
c) 11-19	16	37 %
d) 20-29	3	7 %
e) 30+	4	9 %

Education

a) No college/university	2	5 %
b) Some college/university but no degree	4	9 %
c) Bachelor's degree	4	9 %
d) Bachelor's & working on Master's	11	26 %
e) Master's degree	19	44 %
f) Master's & working on doctorate	2	5 %
g) Doctoral degree	1	2 %

Appendix J - The Lesson Manual

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Teaching Children about Communion

Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these." The Sacrament of Holy Communion is a time in which we, as pastors and congregations, can encourage our children to come to Jesus. Many parents have asked me over the years when their children can participate in the Sacrament.

While the Bible is silent on who participated in Communion it does suggest that children were included in the life of the worshipping community from the start. Up until the middle ages children were allowed to take Communion. The Free Methodist Church has permitted children to participate, although it appears much depends on the will of the local pastor. The Pastor's Handbook gives guidance on this matter suggesting that children who have a desire to participate, a personal relationship with Jesus, and a basic understanding of Communion may participate.

My experience and research has shown that most pastors and churches provide very little instruction to children - or even adults - on this important means of grace. Some pastors have expressed a desire for a tool to use with children in teaching them about the Lord's Supper. These lessons have been developed for that specific purpose.

The intention is that the pastor should teach these lessons. It is important that children see the pastor not just as the pastor of adults but as their pastor also. Since the pastor is the one who serves Communion he should be the one to teach children these lessons about it. Furthermore, working with the children will help the pastor understand them better thereby enabling him or her to better minister to them.

The lessons have been carefully outlined. Resources needed for the lessons have been included except in the case of food items and wooden figures. The lessons use wooden story figures and instructions for making these have been included. These figures may also be purchased through me. The five drawings that accompany the lessons were made by Kevin Patterson, a graphic artist and member of the Caistor Centre Free Methodist Church.

Scheduling Options

1. Sunday School Hour

The advantage of this time might be in ease of scheduling and probability of better attendance on the part of children. The main drawback to this time period is the time limitation. Generally, a Sunday School time would provide only about 45 minutes at the most for each lesson. One would need to keep the lessons moving along. If this time is chosen Lesson Five should be scheduled at a different time, possibly a Saturday, when more time is available. Other Lessons may need to be abbreviated somewhat.

2. Weeknight or Saturday

This provides a less restricted time frame that would allow for questions, follow-up interaction with the story figures by the children, etc. The drawback to this approach would be mainly in achieving a full participation on the part of children in the Congregation due to conflicts with other activities. In most cases this could be overcome.

3. Once a month for five months

This approach offers the same advantages as the weeknight or Saturday approach. In churches where bringing children together for five weeks on a weekly basis may be unworkable due to other midweek activities, this may provide a suitable option. The disadvantage is the difficulty in keeping continuity between the lessons due to the length of time between them.

Bulletin Board

You may wish to do a bulletin board that builds lesson by lesson, to be a visual reminder of the lessons. You may wish to have the children bring in a picture of themselves at the first lesson. Put a picture of Jesus among their pictures and arrange them as if they were at the Lord's Supper. At the

top put the caption "Communion Helps Us Remember . . ." After each lesson add the picture for the lesson and the related caption. These pictures could be arranged around the outside. The captions above the lesson pictures could be in the form of thought boxes.

Suggested Captions

1. Jesus died for our sins
2. Jesus is present with us
3. Jesus is preparing a home for us in heaven
4. Jesus invites us to follow Him

The drawings made by the children could be posted around the room or throughout the church during the weeks of the course.

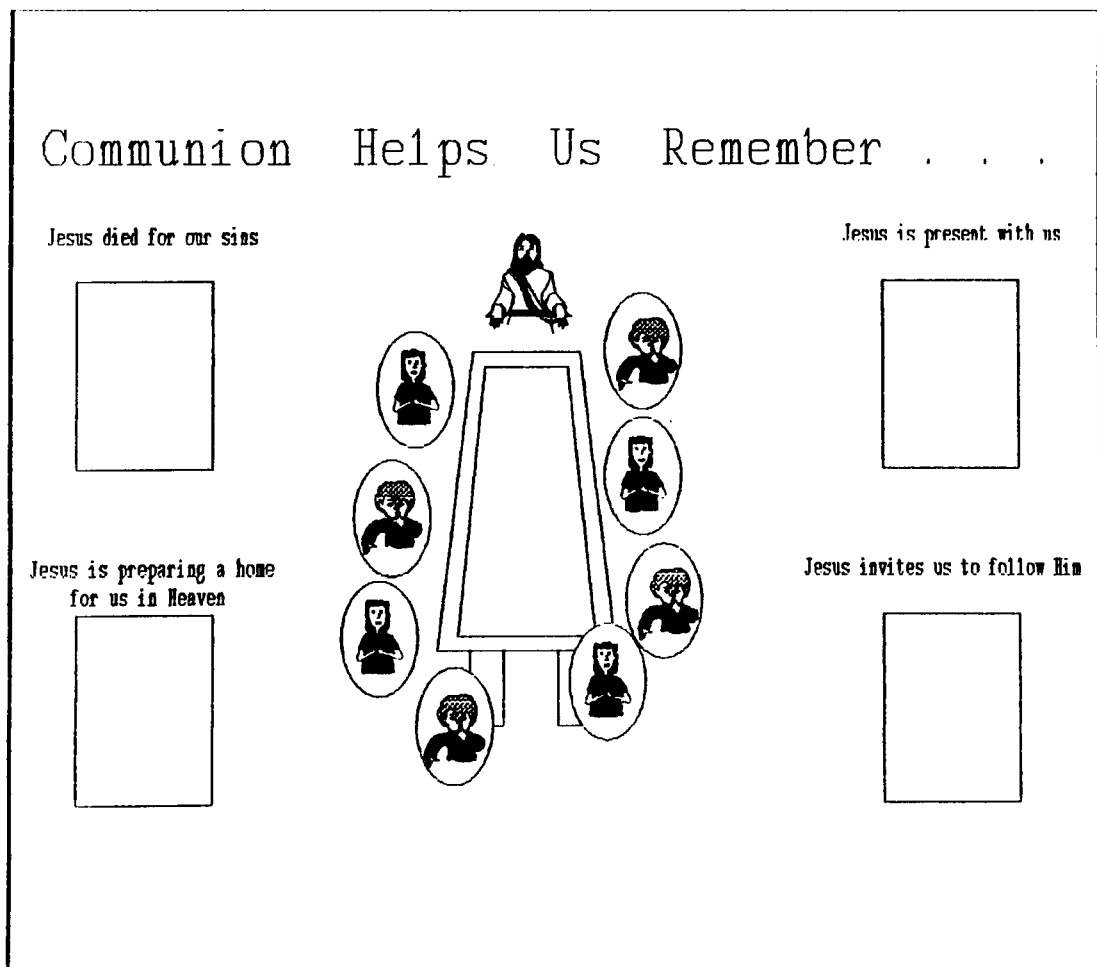


Figure 1 - Communion Bulletin Board

Communion Liturgy

The Lessons include portions of the Communion liturgy. No attempt is made to deal with the liturgy in depth with the exception of the Invitation. The purpose of including the liturgy is to give children some familiarity with it so that they may feel more comfortable participating in the Communion service. The lessons give them an opportunity to practice reading the liturgy. Brief summary explanations of the sections are also included. A large print booklet of the Liturgy is included to make it easier for the children to follow. When Communion is served parents might be encouraged to read along in the booklet with their children. You may wish to ask other adults to "adopt" children whose parents do not attend.

Recognition of Course Graduates

Giving special recognition to children who complete the course of instruction is strongly encouraged. Here are some possible ideas:

1. Hand out a certificate to each child who completes the five lessons.
2. Have a special "graduation" Communion service
 - a) If the lessons are taught during Sunday School, schedule a Communion service on the Sunday following the final lesson. Use the unleavened bread made by the children. Before Communion call each child up to the front and present them with their certificate. Make it a special event for them.
 - b) If the course is being offered on a weeknight or Saturday, a special "graduation" Communion service may be scheduled on the sixth week or as an extension of the fifth week's lesson. The children invite their parents and friends, receive a special certificate, and celebrate Communion.
3. Print the names of the graduating children in the church bulletin.

Lesson One - Remembering Jesus

Lesson Outline

1. Introduction of the course.
2. Bible Story Jesus' Last Passover
3. Activity - Draw a picture about the story of Jesus' Last Passover
4. Hymn (Overhead # 11 or Hymnal # 321) - According to Thy Gracious Word
5. Meaning of Communion - Remembering.
6. Prayer
- 7 The Liturgy - The Lord's Prayer, Sanctus, Gloria Patri
8. Sing hymn again
9. Hand out copies of Lord's Prayer to take home.

Lesson Objectives

To help the children

- know that Communion helps them remember who Jesus is and what he has done for them.
- appreciate Jesus more and sense awe when remembering Jesus died for them.
- remember Jesus when they take Communion.

Materials Needed

1. Photographs of people in special events. Pictures of weddings, receiving awards, etc.
2. Materials for Jesus' Last Passover story
 - Green underlay, 45cm by 122cm (18" x 48")
 - Wooden figures of Jesus and twelve disciples (See Resource F - 1)
 - Wooden table, 8 by 22 by 5 cm high (3" x 8 " x 2")
 - Basket for figures (18cm/ 7")
 - Backdrop for upper room: centre part, 18 x 36 cm (7" x 14");
each end, 18 x 10 cm (7" x 4")
 - Small plate with plasticine loaf of unleavened bread
 - Small chalice
 - Basket (8 cm / 3") for plate, chalice, and bread
 - Tray for materials
3. Copies of the Lord's Prayer for each student (Resource O - 3)
4. Materials for activity
 - Paper for drawing on
 - Coloured pencils, crayons, coloured markers (some or all of these)
5. Transparency and Photocopy Masters
 - O - 1 The Invitation
 - O - 2 - The General Confession
 - O - 3 The Lord's Prayer
 - O - 12 - Hymn "According to Thy Gracious Word" (Hymnal # 321)
 - O 15 - Picture of Jesus on the cross

1. Introduction

Welcome, boys and girls. Today we are beginning an adventure in learning. Jesus has given his followers some very special practices. Over the next several weeks we are going to learn about one of those practices the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion as we also call it.

How do the members of your family express their belonging? Very often it is through family events and traditions. Some family traditions centre around meals. When does your family get together for special meals? (Allow the children to respond, then continue with something like the following.) Yes, that's right. Sometimes families get together to celebrate birthdays and anniversaries. Other times we gather for Christmas, New Year's or Thanksgiving to celebrate and remember. These in some ways are a measure of your family's life, love and spirit.

Before Jesus died on the cross for us he gave his followers a family meal. Christians celebrate this meal, which we call Holy Communion or the Lord's Supper. Jesus gave us this family meal to help us remember that he died on the cross for our sins and rose from the dead to give all who receive him as Saviour eternal life. Meals not only allow us to celebrate together as a family, they also nourish us. Jesus asked us to share the Communion meal regularly because he knew it could help us become better Christians. Listen to the story of how this special meal began.

2. Jesus' Last Passover (Matthew 26:26-28)

(This story is taken from Young Children and Worship by Stewart & Berryman, with some minor changes)

Place the tray with the materials for Jesus' Last Passover on the story table. Sit quietly while you feel the story forming in you. Then roll out the green felt underlay and smooth it, as you say:

Once every year, the people of God

Place the disciples on the underlay so they are in three rows, four figures abreast, as you slowly continue:

go up to Jerusalem to celebrate the feast of the Passover to remember how God led them out of Egypt and through the Red Sea to freedom. Every year Jesus

Present Jesus and place him to your right, facing the disciples, so they block his movement.

celebrated the Passover feast in Jerusalem with his family and friends.

Motion over the heads of the disciples.

But this year Jesus' friends did not want to go. They were afraid. They said to Jesus, "Don't go. People in Jerusalem want to kill you."

Pause.

But Jesus said, "We must go."

Move Jesus toward you and around the disciples, stopping him about six inches before you get to the space where the backdrop will go. So that you will have to move only three pairs of disciples, move two from each of the ends closest to you so they are lined up behind Jesus in twos.

When the day of Passover came, some of Jesus' friends went to an upper room

Place the upper room backdrop near the end of the underlay to your left.

and prepared the feast.

Place the table in front of the backdrop. Put the plate with unleavened bread (plasticine) on the table, and then the cup.

When evening came, Jesus

Move Jesus to the upper room by going in front of the table and then around to the centre back. Follow with the disciples as you say:

and his friends went to the upper room to celebrate the feast of the Passover. They were still afraid.

When all are around the table, say:

While they were eating the Passover Jesus

Touch Jesus

said the words of the feast in a way they had never heard before. Jesus took the bread

With both hands, lift the bread straight up and hold it.

and blessed it

Place your hand over it like a blessing.

and broke it

Break it in two

and gave it to them, saying,

As you lower your hands with the broken bread, reach out to the two disciples facing Jesus and offer it to them, as you say:

"Take. Eat. This is my body, given for you. Do this to remember me."

Continue around the circle as you say this. Then place the bread on the plate.

Then Jesus took the cup

Lift the cup straight up with two hands.

and said, "Drink this, all of you. This is my blood which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins. Do this to remember me."

Lower the cup and pass it to each disciple. Pause and sit back. Then say:

Then they sang a hymn and went out to a garden to pray.

Move Jesus and disciples out, behind the backdrop so they can't be seen.

Then it happened. People who didn't like Jesus took him. They wouldn't let him go. Later they nailed him to a cross to kill him. Jesus died. It was very sad.

Show picture of Jesus on the cross (Resource O - 15). Pause for a moment.

But three days later God did an amazing thing. God made Jesus alive again.

Pause for a moment and look at the table.

So, every time we eat this bread

Touch the bread.

and drink this cup

Touch the cup.

we remember Jesus, that he died for our sins, and that God made him alive again.

Responding to God's Word: Wondering Together

I wonder how it felt to be around this table and hear Jesus say, "Take. Eat. This is my body given for you"?

I wonder how the disciples felt eating the bread and drinking from the cup?

I wonder how they felt when Jesus died? (show picture)

I wonder how they felt when they heard God made Jesus alive?

I wonder what you think about Jesus dying for you

I wonder If you remember Jesus when you are close to this table?

3. Activity Time

Provide all the children with some paper and crayons, coloured pencils, or markers. Invite the children to draw a picture or pictures about the story of Jesus' Last Passover. As they are drawing talk to the children individually, asking them about their pictures.

4. Hymn Sing

Sing verse 1 of the Hymn "According to thy Gracious Word" (*Resource O - 12*) Teach the child the actions. (Music is found in The Hymnal for Worship and Celebration # 321)

5. Remembering

This new meal that Jesus started the night before he died is called the Lord's Supper. Sometimes it is also called Holy Communion or the Eucharist (which means thanksgiving).

Today we are going to learn one reason why Jesus gave us this little meal to celebrate.

Set up photographs. Then ask:

What are these? Do you know who they are photographs or pictures of? Why do we have photographs? That's right, to help us remember people and things. These photographs help me remember

Describe what your photos help you remember. Then say:

Before cameras were invented people did other things to help them remember friends and events. I wonder what we would do if we didn't have cameras?

Allow the children to respond.

Yes, we might draw a picture or build something.

Jesus did something very important for everyone including you and me. He died on the cross for our sins. (Show the picture of Jesus on the cross.) He wanted us to remember him and what he did. I wonder why? Remembering would help us be thankful and obey God.

Since he didn't have a camera he couldn't leave a picture like this one with his followers, so he left his followers an event, a meal which would remind them of what he did. He used common everyday things. Everyone ate bread so he let bread stand for his body. He was God but he became man took on a human body - so he could die for us. Everyone in Jesus' day drank wine or grape juice. He let the juice stand for his blood. Jesus shed his blood on the cross. Blood is life without blood we die. So Jesus said the grape juice was to remind us that it cost Jesus his life to make it possible for God to forgive our sins and be our friend again.

Do any of you know what a memorial is? A memorial is an event or thing that helps us remember someone or something special. Each year on November 11 we have Remembrance Day services across the country. People lay wreaths, and speeches are given about soldiers who fought in World War I, World War II, and the Korean War. We are told that they fought and sacrificed their lives so we could enjoy the prosperity, peace, and freedom we have today. These services are memorial services. They remind us what someone did in the past in order to teach us how we should live today. They remember the sacrifice and effort of others so we might honour them.

Communion is a memorial. When Jesus gave us the Communion meal he said, "Do this in remembrance of me. It helps us remember what he taught. It helps us remember that he died for us. We are reminded that we have sinned and we were God's enemies, but Jesus died on the cross so that we could be forgiven and become friends with God. The ritual and the small meal all help us remember Jesus.

6. Prayer

Lead the children in prayer thanking God for the Lord's Supper by which we can remember what Jesus has done for us. Give the children opportunity to pray as well.

7. Communion Liturgy

Jesus has given us a small meal to help us remember that he died on the cross for our salvation. We have a service of prayers and praise that helps us to remember Jesus. You may not know all these prayers so during our lessons we are going to practice them. Then the next time we have

Communion you will be better able to join with all the people.

Using *Resource O - 1 The Invitation*

The first part is the invitation. It tells us who should take Communion and who should not take it. We will learn more about this in the fourth lesson. Let us say it together.

Using *Resource O - 2 The General Confession*

The next part is called the General Confession. In this prayer we tell God that we are sorry for our sins and ask for his mercy and forgiveness. Let us say it together.

Using *Resource O - 3 The Lord's Prayer*

The third part of the Communion ritual is the Lord's Prayer. This is the prayer Jesus taught his disciples. We are going to memorize this prayer during our lessons. Let us say it together
Next week we will practice some more of the liturgy.

8. Hymn Sing

Sing the hymn "According to thy Gracious Word" again (*Resource O - 12*).

9. Conclusion

Briefly review today's focus - Communion helps us remember Jesus. Then distribute the handouts.

1. The Lord's Prayer (*Resource O - 3*) - ask the children to begin to memorize it.
2. Give each one a picture of Jesus on the cross (*Resource O - 15*) to colour at home.

Lesson Two Growing in Jesus

Lesson Outline

1. Introduction & Review
2. Bible Story - A Special Meal
3. Prayer/Lord's Prayer
4. Hymn According to Thy Gracious Word
5. Meaning of Communion - Means of Grace
6. Activities - Drawing & Letter Maze
7. The Liturgy - The Invitation to the Collect
8. Hymn - Amazing Grace
9. Wrap Up and Handouts

Lesson Objectives

To help the children

- know that Jesus is really present when they take Communion and that Communion can make them stronger Christians.
- sense and enjoy Jesus' presence with them at Communion.
- take Communion expecting to meet Jesus and become stronger Christians.

Materials Needed

1. Transparency and Photocopy Masters

- O - 1 The Invitation
- O - 2 The General Confession
- O - 3 The Lord's Prayer
- O - 4 Affirmation of Faith
- O - 5 The Collect
- O - 11 Communion Liturgy
- O - 12 Hymn "According to Thy Gracious Word"
- O - 13 Hymn "Amazing Grace"
- O - 15 Jesus on the Cross
- O - 16 Good Shepherd

2. Materials for Story

Two wooden circles cut from " plywood and covered with green felt, 33cm (13") in diameter. On the first circle make a "sheepfold" from dowels with two rows of string strung between them like a fence; one section is a gate. On the second circle place the table.

Wooden table, 8 by 22 by 5 cm high (3" x 8 " x 2")

Wooden figures (See *Resource F - 1*)

Basket for the sheep (13cm/ 5")

Basket for people (18cm/ 7")

Small plate with plasticine loaf of unleavened bread

Small chalice

Basket (8 cm / 3") for plate, chalice, and bread

Tray for materials

3. Vegetables

4. Letter Maze for each child *Resources A - 1a* and *A -1b*

5. Picture of Good Shepherd for each child *Resource O 16*.

6. Copy of skit from Lesson Three for each child. Before this lesson go over the skit and assign parts to each child. Using a hi-lighter to mark his/her lines works well. It is best if the pastor takes the part of Jesus. If there are more than nine children in the class you may consider splitting the narrator's lines between several children.

Lesson Option

Tell the story in the sanctuary followed by a prayer time around the altar. This will help reinforce the connection between the altar, prayer, and the presence of Jesus. By telling the story in the sanctuary you avoid the distractions that would occur when moving from a classroom to the sanctuary.

If the sanctuary is unavailable, perhaps an altar could be set up in the classroom. Even one of the sanctuary altar rails could be used if they are portable.

1. Introduction

Welcome boys and girls. What can you tell me about this picture? (Show the children a photograph of someone or something. Let the children give their answers). Last week we learned that the Lord's Supper or Communion was given to us by Jesus to help us remember what he did for us when he died on the cross. (Show picture of Jesus on the cross.) Just as a photograph helps us remember people or events so Communion helps us remember Jesus.

This week we will learn something more about Communion. Do any of you like to eat? What would happen if you didn't eat? That's right, you'd die. Eating food keeps our physical bodies alive and healthy. But there's more to us than just a physical body. There is also what we sometimes call our "inner person" or our "soul." It's the part of us that is happy or sad. It's the part of us that says "yes" or "no" to things. Jesus has given us a special meal to feed our inner person. It's time to hear one of God's stories. A story about a special meal.

2. Bible Story - A Special Meal

Walk slowly to the storage shelf and get the Good Shepherd tray and the Lord's Supper tray. Carry them to the circle. Place the circle with the table next to the circle with the sheepfold, making sure they touch at one point. Silently touch the connecting point of the two circles for a moment. Sit quietly while you feel the story forming in you. Then say:

Once there lived a man on earth who said such amazing things and did such wonderful things that people began to follow him. But they didn't know who he was. So one day they simply had to ask him, and he said, "I am the Good Shepherd."

Touch the Good Shepherd.

I know each of my sheep by name.

Touch each sheep with a gentle stroking.

And they know the sound of my voice. So when I call my sheep from the sheepfold, they follow me.

Open the gate. Begin to move the Good Shepherd out from the door with the sheep following.

I walk in front of the sheep to show them the way.

Continue moving the sheep, with the Good Shepherd leading the way, around the edge of the circle toward the point where the two circles touch. Do not hurry. There is a great deal of silence. Move the Good Shepherd, and then go back and move each sheep along. When the Shepherd and the sheep move across the point of contact between the circles, pause a second before crossing.

I show them the way to the good, green grass and the quiet, refreshing water.

Bring the Shepherd and sheep around in front of the table, moving them on the outer edge of the circle. When the sheep are all around the table move the Shepherd forward. Then trace the edges of the table as you say:

This is the table of the Good Shepherd.

Open the basket with the plate and bread, present them, and place them on the table.

A special plate

Pick up the cup and present it. Then put it on the table as you say:

and a special cup are on this table. Here the Good Shepherd feeds his sheep.

Gesture toward the table. Pause. Sit back a moment.

Many come to this joyful feast. They come from the east

Present an adult figure and exchange it for a sheep from the left side of the table.

and west

Present another adult figure and exchange it for a sheep from the right side of the table.

and from the north and south.

Present the figure of the pastor and exchange it for the sheep opposite the Good Shepherd. Continue replacing every other sheep. Pick up a child figure and present it and say:

And the children come too.

Place the children between the adults. Pause a moment.

The Good Shepherd loves children. They are very special to him.

Then remove the Good Shepherd, placing it in the basket.

The Good Shepherd is still with us in a special way, but we cannot see him.
And one of the people of God

Pick up the pastor, who is opposite the Good Shepherd at the table, and bring it to the place where the Shepherd was.

called the pastor, comes and says the very words of the Good Shepherd
and all share in his presence here.

Motion around the circle of people, bringing your hands to point to the bread and cup.

We eat the bread and drink the juice. We think about the Good Shepherd.
We remember that he died for us.
We remember he died to forgive our sins when we ask him to.
We remember the Good Shepherd is really present with us.
And as we think about these things the Good Shepherd feeds us.

Sit back in silence for a moment.

Responding to God's Word: Wondering Together

I wonder if these people have names?

I wonder if the people are happy to be at this great feast?

I wonder where this place might really be?

Point to the table.

I wonder if you have ever been close to this table?

I wonder if you have ever heard the very words of the Good Shepherd?

Show picture of Good Shepherd

I wonder if you have ever felt the Good Shepherd there with you?

3. Prayer

Invite the children to kneel around the altar for a time of prayer. Introduce it by saying, "We can't see God with our eyes but God has given us the special gift of our imaginations. In our imaginations we can see Jesus. Let's all close our eyes. In your imagination can you see Jesus, the Good Shepherd, coming to kneel in front of you? This is your time to tell him anything you want to tell him."

Give the children time to pray. Close by thanking Jesus for being there and hearing our prayers. Then ask the children to pray the Lord's prayer together (Overhead # 3).

4. Hymn Sing

According to Thy Gracious Word (verses 1 & 2 with actions)

Resource O - 12

5. Meaning of Communion - Means of Grace

Jesus gave us this special meal so that we would always remember what he did for us. What did he do for us? (Let the children respond.)

Jesus gave us this meal for another reason as well. He wants all of us to become more like him. Jesus lived exactly the way God wanted him to - and exactly the way God wants all of us to live. So we can please God better by following Jesus' example. There are several things we should do as Christians because they help us become more like Jesus. Taking Communion is one thing we do as Christians that can help us become more like Jesus.

We call it a "means of grace." Very simply a means of grace is something God asks us to do because when we do it, it makes us more like Jesus. A means of grace is a practice that God has asked us to carry out. He has made it so, that if we do these "means of grace" with faith, we will become stronger Christians.

I have here some vegetables. (You may wish to give some to the children to eat.) Are they good for you to eat? Do they help you to grow healthy and strong? How do they make you healthy and strong? Do they still make you strong and healthy even if you don't know how they do it?

The Lord's Supper helps us grow spiritually just like food, such as vegetables, helps us grow physically. It helps us grow even if we don't know

how it does it. Of course, eating the Lord's Supper is not magical. We can take Communion and not become more like Jesus.

But the Lord's Supper is a means of grace. Jesus is there even though we can't see him. We can feel his presence. We can remember how much he loves us. We can tell him how much we love him. That makes us strong to live for Jesus.

6. Activities

a) Draw a picture

Ask the children to draw a picture of a time when they felt close to Jesus or a picture showing what they might tell Jesus when they take Communion. Depending on the size of the class, bring in two or more other adults. Each adult could listen to two or three children tell about their picture. Have the adults draw a picture and share it with the children.

b) Letter Maze

Use Resource A - 1a and A - 1b. Resource A - 1a is designed for children in Grade 3 and above. Resource A - 1b should be used with children in Grade 2 and under. Adult assistance will be helpful. Resource A - 1c provides the solution to the Letter Maze. If time is restricted this could be used as a take home activity. Finding their way through the Letter Maze will still be an interesting challenge.

7. Communion Liturgy

Last week we began to practice the Communion ritual or service. Practicing the Communion liturgy will help you join in with the adults the next time we have Communion.

Let's say the Invitation, General Confession, and Lord's Prayer again this week.

Resource O - 1 The Invitation

Resource O - 2 The General Confession

Resource O - 3 The Lord's Prayer

Today we will add the Affirmation of Faith and the Collect. The Affirmation of Faith reminds us that God is merciful. In this prayer we thank God that he will forgive anyone who will turn away from his/her sinning and

ask him to forgive his/her sins. If we have asked Jesus to forgive our sins and received him into our hearts then this prayer helps us to thank God for his forgiveness.

Resource O - 4 The Affirmation of Faith

When we pray the Collect we admit that God knows everything about us and ask him to make us clean on the inside.

Resource O 5 The Collect

Summary

So far we have practiced the Invitation, the General Confession, the Lord's Prayer, the Affirmation of Faith, and the Collect. Using *Resource O - 11 The Communion Liturgy* review their meanings

8. Hymn Sing

Amazing Grace

Resource O 13 (Music is found in The Hymnal for Worship and Celebration # 202)

9. Wrap Up & Handouts - Today we learned that Communion is a special time when Jesus wants to meet with us and feed our inner selves. He has given us Communion so we can become better Christians. So Communion helps us remember Jesus and what he has done for us. And it helps us become stronger Christians.

Give each participant a picture of the Good Shepherd (*Resource O 16*) and a copy of the skit for Lesson 3. Highlight the lines that apply to him/her. If there are children who do not read yet, ask their parents to help them learn their line for next week.

Lesson Three Our Heavenly Hope

Outline

1. Welcome
2. Bible Story - Last Supper Skit
3. Hymn - Amazing Grace
4. Prayer
5. Meaning of Communion - Pledge of Heaven
6. Hymn - According to Thy Gracious Word
7. Activity - Picture of Heaven
8. The Liturgy
9. Wrap Up & Handouts

Lesson Objectives

To help the children

- know that Communion is a promise of heaven.
- feel that heaven is a little more real.
- think more about heaven and Jesus' return when they take Communion.

Materials

1. Skit materials

Copies of the skit for each child (in the event they forget theirs)

Dress up robes for the children (optional)

Plates Cups

Juice Bread

Table Chairs

2. Transparency and Photocopy Masters

O - 3 The Lord's Prayer

O - 4 Affirmation of Faith

O - 5 The Collect

O - 6 The Sanctus

O - 7 The Gloria Patri

O - 11 Communion Liturgy

O - 12 According to Thy Gracious Word

O - 13 Amazing Grace

O - 15 Jesus on the Cross

O - 16 Good Shepherd

O - 17 Jesus and the Heavenly Feast

3. Material for Activity

Picture of heaven page (*Resource A - 2*)

1. Welcome

Welcome boys and girls. So far we have learned that the Lord's Supper was given to us by Jesus to help us remember what he did for us when he died on the cross. (Show picture of Jesus on the cross.) Communion helps us remember Jesus.

Last time we learned that the Lord's Supper is a means of grace. It is a time when Jesus is present in a special way. Jesus tells us that he loves us. When we take Communion by faith, Jesus makes stronger Christians.

Today, we will learn something more about Communion. Do you want to go to heaven some day? When Jesus went back to heaven, he promised to come back someday to take us to our forever home. Communion helps us remember that Jesus is preparing our forever home for us. Jesus told his disciples about this before he died on the cross. We are going to learn about it today through our skit. Let's begin.

2. Last Supper Skit

The children will be seated around a long table and play the parts of Jesus and his disciples at the Last Supper. Set the table for a meal complete with some food items that the children may eat. Serve the bread as the narrator reads that part; likewise with the juice, although you should probably use individual cups. Following this, simply follow the skit with the children reading their parts.

Narrator: On the evening of the Passover Jesus and his friends celebrated the feast of the Passover.

Jesus: I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not eat it again until it finds fulfillment in the kingdom of God.

Narrator: While they were eating the Passover, Jesus said the words of the feast in a way they had never heard before. Jesus took the bread . . . and blessed it
and broke it
and gave it to them,

Jesus: Take. Eat. This is my body, given for you.

Narrator: Then Jesus took the cup.

Jesus: Drink this, all of you. This is my blood which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins.

Narrator: After they had eaten the bread and drunk the juice Jesus said

Jesus: I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom.

Bartholomew: What do you mean?

Jesus: I will be leaving you soon.

Narrator: This made them very sad.

Peter: Lord, where are you going?

Jesus: Do not be worried. You trust in God, don't you? Trust me. There is plenty of room for you in my Father's home. If that were not so, would I have told you that I'm on my way to get a place ready for you? And if I'm on my way to get your place ready, I'll come back and get you so you can live where I live. And you already know the way to the place where I am going.

Thomas: Lord, we have no idea where you're going. How do you expect us to know the way?

Jesus: I am the way and the truth and the life. No one gets to the Father apart from me. If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well.

Philip: Lord, show us the Father; then we'll be content.

Jesus: You've been with me all this time, Philip, and you still don't understand? To see me is to see the Father.

John: What will you be doing there, Master?

Jesus: Many things. I will be praying for you. I will be preparing a home for you. A home far greater than you can imagine. And we will have a great feast there.

Simon: What will it be like there?

Jesus: It will be a place of great joy. You will never be sad there. No one will ever get sick or die. You won't have to worry about hurting yourself. You will receive a great inheritance.

Thaddeus: Who will be there?

Jesus: Everyone who believes in me and follows my commands.

James: When will you come back?

Jesus: When everything is ready. Only my Father knows the day or the hour. Do not worry about when I'll return. Remember that I will come back. Watch for me. Be ready. Eat this new meal of bread and juice and, whenever you do, remember that I am coming back. Let it remind you that I am preparing a wonderful place for you.

Narrator: The disciples did not want Jesus to leave them. But Jesus said it was for the best. This special house or mansion would be in a very special place. We call this place heaven.

Jesus: Let us sing an hymn together and then we'll go to the Mount of Olives to pray.

3. Hymn Sing

Amazing Grace (*Resource O 13*)

4. Prayer

Allow any children who wish to to thank God for the promise of heaven. Then pray a short prayer ending with the Lord's Prayer and the Collect.

5. Meaning of Communion - Pledge of Heaven

Jesus gave us the Lord's Supper to help us remember what he has promised us -a home in heaven and a life that is better than we could ever imagine. The Bible teaches us that Jesus has gone to prepare a special place for each of us.

Communion helps remind us that Jesus is getting a wonderful place ready for us in heaven, and that he is coming back for us. When we eat the Lord's Supper we can remember Jesus loves us, and is preparing a fantastic home for us. Listen to this story about a new home.

A New Home

Father had gone away. Clifford and Miranda wished he would come back soon. They loved their father. He played with them. He listened to all the things they had to tell him. But they worried about Father's return too. This time he wasn't gone on an ordinary business trip. This one was different. They remembered what he had said.

"Miranda and Clifford, I want you to listen carefully to what I'm going to tell you."

"Yes, sir," they replied.

"I have to go on a long business trip. I will miss you a lot. But while I am gone I am going to prepare a new home for us to live in. It will have some very special things for you. It will mean that we will move from this little house. Our new home will be so much nicer. And there will be lots of children for you to play with.

"But I like it here, Daddy!" protested Clifford.

"Ya, so do I," whined Miranda. "I don't ever want to leave here."

"But wouldn't you like to live in a house where you had your own room? Here we are so crowded you two have to share a tiny room. And our living room is very small."

"But we're used to that," objected Clifford.

"Wouldn't you like to have room for that train layout you've dreamed about, Clifford?"

"You mean we'd have a place that big?" asked Clifford with growing excitement.

"That's right. And, Miranda, you would have room for a beautiful doll house and other furniture you have wanted. In fact, in our new home we will have things you haven't even dreamed of yet."

"Wow! Tell us more."

"Our new home will have a huge lawn so you will have lots of room to play. You won't have to play in the street. And there's no train track behind our new home."

"What about our friends? We'll miss our friends."

"That's another thing," said Father with a smile. "Your friends Michael, Terry, and Heather are moving to the same place as we are."

"They are? We didn't know they were moving," responded Miranda, a little upset that her friends hadn't said anything. "When are they moving?"

"I don't know," replied Father. "They might move there before us or, perhaps, after we do. But they are coming and there will be many other children there too."

"What about Billy's family?" asked Clifford.

"Well, I don't think they are. I've talked to Billy's father, but he just won't let go of the little shack they have now. He refuses to meet the conditions."

"What would he have to do?" wondered Miranda.

"He has to pledge allegiance to the King and reject that rebel leader named Lucifer. But Billy's father doesn't even want to admit there's a King."

"I hope he changes his mind," said Clifford.

"Yes, so do I," agreed Father. "Now, I'm leaving in the morning, but there are two things I want you to do while I'm gone. First, I want you to make sure you put your toys and things away each night."

"Why, Dad?"

"Well, you need to be ready to go when I come back because we will have to move right away. Now, I have a special snack for you. Every Sunday night I will telephone home. When I do, your mother will give you a portion of this snack. I will talk with you at that time even though you won't see me."

Father left on his trip and each week Clifford and Miranda thought about their Father and the wonderful new home he had promised them. And every Sunday night they ate some of the special snack and talked to their Father. They were glad for these special times because it helped them remember their Father loved them and cared for them. It helped them remember his promises.

"When is Daddy coming home?" whined Miranda one day. "I'm tired of waiting."

"I don't know when he's coming back. But he said to be ready. If you aren't ready you'll be disappointed," answered Mother.

"It's hard to wait," stated Clifford.

"Yes it is," replied Mother. "But remember, your Father always keeps his promises. He will return soon."

A few days later Clifford and Miranda were looking out their front window into the dingy street. Suddenly, they saw a shiny car drive up the road and pull into their driveway. It was Father. They rushed outside and threw themselves into their father's arms. After they hugged for a while and said hello, father said, "I'm glad you were watching for me, children. Are you ready?"

Later that night they left that tiny little shack by the railroad tracks. Clifford and Miranda, tired from the activities and excitement of the day, quickly fell asleep. In what seemed only a few minutes they were being awakened by Father's voice saying, "We're home. Come in and see what I have made ready for you."

Clifford and Miranda jumped out of the car, then stopped in amazement

as they looked at the house. It was more beautiful than all the pictures of mansions they had ever seen. Then they ran into the house, up the gorgeous marble staircase, and down the hallway until they saw rooms with their names on them. Clifford stepped inside. He gasped in wonder. His room was bigger than their whole house had been. And there was a train layout with mountains and streams, villages, and switching yards. He had never seen one so wonderful - even in the picture books. Miranda found her room decorated in her favourite colours. And there was the doll house! It was huge. The furnishings were complete and detailed. It looked like a real house in miniature.

Then the children rushed out of their rooms to share their delight with each other. Father stood in the hall smiling. Clifford and Miranda rushed to him, throwing their arms around him. "Thank you for loving us so much," they said. "Thank you for our wonderful home."

Father smiled, hugged them and said, "This is only the beginning; there's more, much more."

Jesus has gone away to prepare a forever home for everyone who trusts in Him. Jesus has gone away to prepare our forever home. He has promised to come back for us. Communion helps us remember that Jesus is getting a heavenly home ready for each of us. Communion helps us remember that Jesus is coming back to take us to our forever home. Wouldn't you like to go there someday?

6. Hymn Sing

According to Thy Gracious Word (verses 1-3 with actions)
(*Resource O - 12*)

7. Activity

You are taking a walk through heaven. What does it look like?

Using *Resource A - 2* invite the children to draw a picture of heaven.

8. The Liturgy

So far we have practiced the Invitation, the General Confession, the Lord's Prayer, the Affirmation of Faith, and the Collect. Today we will add the Sanctus, and the Gloria Patri. Let's start with the Lord's Prayer today.

Resource O - 3 The Lord's Prayer

Resource O - 4 The Affirmation of Faith

Resource O - 5 The Collect

When we say the Sanctus we are praising God because he is holy or pure

Resource O - 6 The Sanctus

When we repeat the Gloria Patri we are thanking God for his faithfulness. He always keeps his promises.

Resource O - 7 The Gloria Patri

Summary

Let's remember what the different prayers mean.

Using *Resource O 11 The Communion Liturgy* review the meanings of the prayers.

9. Wrap Up

Heaven is a wonderful place. Better than anything we have ever seen or heard about. Jesus gave us the Communion meal to celebrate so that we would remember that he died on the cross to save us from our sins. He gave it to us as a time when we could meet him in a very special way and so grow on the inside to be more like Jesus. And as we learned today, Communion helps us look ahead to what Jesus is preparing for us in heaven. It helps us remember Jesus is coming back for us. It helps us remember that Jesus will take us to our forever home that is more wonderful than we could ever imagine. Next week we will find out who should take Communion.

Hand out pictures of Jesus and the Banquet to each child (*Resource O - 17*).

Lesson Four Who Should Eat the Lord's Supper?

Outline

1. Introduction
2. Bible Story - Jesus Calls People to be His Followers
3. Hymn I Have Decided to Follow Jesus (#376 or Overhead # 14)
4. Prayer - The Lord's Prayer
5. The Liturgy - The Invitation
6. Hymn - According to Thy Gracious Word
7. Activity - Matching Game
8. The Liturgy
9. Wrap Up

Lesson Objectives

To help the children

- know that Communion is for anyone who wants to follow Jesus.
- sense that Jesus wants to be their friend.
- take Communion because they want to follow Jesus.

Materials

1. Materials for the Story

Green felt Brown felt
Blue felt 2 wooden boats
Wooden figures of Jesus, five disciples, seven people, rich man,
Zacchaeus
Wooden tree
Booth for tax collector

2. Transparency and Photocopy Masters

- O - 1 The Invitation
- O - 3 The Lord's Prayer
- O - 6 The Sanctus
- O 7 The Gloria Patri
- O 8 Prayer for Spiritual Communion
- O 9 Prayer of Consecration of the Elements
- O - 11 Communion Liturgy
- O - 12 According to Thy Gracious Word
- O - 14 I Have Decided to Follow Jesus
- O 18 Picture of Zaachaeus and Jesus

3. Materials for Activities & Handouts

- a. Matching Game *Resource A 3*
- b. Wordmaze Puzzle *Resource A 4a, A - 4b*
- c. Picture of Zacchaeus & Jesus *Resource O - 18*

Introduction

Welcome, boys and girls. Have you ever been to the fair or a theme park like Canada's Wonderland or Marineland? What do you like about those places? They have lots of exciting rides, don't they? Some of the rides have a sign beside them that tell you you have to be so tall to go on that ride. Have there been times when you couldn't go on a ride because you were too small? There are other events such as hockey games, Disney on Ice, or movies for which you have to buy tickets if you want to go. They won't let you in without a ticket. All these things we call conditions. If you want to go on the rides, you have to meet the conditions - like being so tall. If you want to go to the hockey game, you have to meet the conditions - have a ticket.

At our Communion services there are conditions that help people know whether or not they can take Communion. These conditions are written down in what we call the invitation. Let's read it together (Overhead # 1).

You who truly and earnestly repent of your sins, who live in love and peace with your neighbours, and who intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking in His holy ways, draw near with faith, and take this holy sacrament to your comfort; and, humbly kneeling, make your honest confession to Almighty God.

Now let's listen to a story that will help us understand those words.

The Story - Jesus Calls People to be His Followers

Take out story materials. Sit quietly while you feel the story forming in you. Then roll out the green felt underlay and smooth it. Place the blue felt on top of the green and place the boat in the water. Then, as you present Jesus say:

Jesus was a wonderful teacher and did amazing things to help people. Many people became interested in Jesus. Jesus called a few people to be his special learners. We call them disciples. He had conditions for people who wanted to be his disciples.

Put Peter and Andrew in the boat. Place James, John, and Zebedee on the shore at the other end of the water from the boat.

One day Jesus was walking along the seaside. He saw two brothers, Simon Peter and Andrew.

Move Jesus to the first boat with Peter and Andrew.

They were fishermen. They were fishing near the shore.

Pause.

Jesus called to them, "Follow me, and I will teach you how to fish for people." Peter and Andrew packed up their net, left behind their fishing boat, and went with Jesus.

Motion with hand and then move Jesus, Peter & Andrew away from the boat.

Nearby two more brothers, James and John, were fixing their nets along with their father, Zebedee.

Move Jesus, Peter, and Andrew beside James, John, and Zebedee

Jesus invited them to follow him as well. James and John said goodbye to their father, left their fishing boat, and went with Jesus.

Motion with hand and then, move all five figures away from the boats. Remove boat, Zebedee and blue felt. Pause. Spread out brown felt road.

A few days later Jesus and his followers were walking through town. He came to the tax collector's booth, where Matthew worked.

Move the figures to the booth. Show picture of Matthew.

Jesus said to Matthew, the tax collector, "Follow me."

Motion with hand and then move Matthew from behind the booth. Then move all the figures away from the booth.

Jesus had other followers too. Then one day a young rich man came to Jesus.

Move rich man figure in front of and facing Jesus.

He asked Jesus what he had to do to be his follower. The rich man loved his money more than anything. Jesus told him, "Give everything you have to the poor and then come and follow me."

Turn the rich man figure around.

The rich man walked away. He was sad. He loved his money more than he loved Jesus so he wouldn't become Jesus' follower.

Move rich man figure away. Pause. Then remove rich man and booth.

Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem for a feast. Crowds of people wanted to see him.

Place three people on the side of the road closer to you and three people opposite them. Place tree up the road from the people.

Zacchaeus was the chief tax collector.

Present Zacchaeus.

People didn't like Zacchaeus. He took too much of their money. So he was very rich. Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus too.

Put Zacchaeus behind the three people and move him up and down, trying to see over them.

But he was too short.

Show him trying to squeeze between the people. Move the people together so he can't.

And the people would not let him through. So Zacchaeus climbed a sycamore tree.

Move him behind the people and up into the tree.

When Jesus came

Move Jesus along the road between the people and stop him beside the tree.

he looked up and called him by name. "Zacchaeus, come down. I must stay with you today." Zacchaeus was so happy, he couldn't help but come right down.

Take him down and walk Jesus and Zacchaeus back along the road together.

But the people were angry.

Say the following as they walk between the people.

"Why is Jesus staying with Zacchaeus? Zacchaeus does bad things. He's a tax collector. He takes money that isn't his."

Move them off the road and stop them, with Jesus and Zacchaeus facing each other and with Jesus' back to the crowd.

Then Zacchaeus said, "Jesus, I will give half of everything I have to the poor. And if I have taken money that doesn't belong to me, I will give it back and four times more."

Jesus said, "Zacchaeus, today you are saved. You are right with God, and you are right with people."

Turn Jesus toward the people and say:

I, the special Son of God, have come to find and save everyone who is lost."

Jesus asked Peter, Andrew, James, and John to leave their fishing boats to follow him. He asked Matthew to give up his job as a tax collector. He asked the rich young man to give up his money and give to the poor. He asked Zaachaeus to treat others fairly and give to the poor. Anyone who wants to follow Jesus must love Jesus more than anything or anyone else. It is the condition for being his disciple.

I wonder how hard it was for the fishermen to leave their fishing boats.

I wonder how it felt to be invited to be with Jesus? (Show picture of Matthew)

I wonder why some people came and others wouldn't?

I wonder how the rich man felt after he left Jesus? I wonder how he felt the next day, the next week?

I wonder what it is like to be so short that you can't see what you want to see?

I wonder how Zacchaeus felt when Jesus called him by name?

I wonder what Jesus and Zacchaeus said as they walked together?

I wonder if it was hard for Zacchaeus to give back what didn't belong to him?

I wonder how he felt when he gave half of his things to the poor?

I wonder how the poor felt?

I wonder how Zacchaeus felt when he was right with God and right with people?

3. Hymn Sing

I Have Decided to Follow Jesus (*Resource O - 14*)

4. Prayer

Give the children opportunity to pray. Give a short prayer thanking God for calling us to follow Jesus. Close with the Lord's Prayer.

5. The Liturgy The Invitation (*Resource O - 1*)

Every time we take Communion or the Lord's Supper we are given this invitation. We have an invitation because this is a very special meal. It reminds me of going to a special restaurant or banquet. You know that when you go to Burger King or Pizza Hut you can wear any clothes you want. Did you know that there are some restaurants where boys have to wear suit coats and ties and the girls have to wear dresses? If you go to a restaurant like that with a T-shirt and some jeans on the people who run the restaurant won't let you in.

The invitation tells us what we need to do or how we must act if we want to take part in the Lord's Supper. It tells us the conditions we must meet if we want to take Communion. The Lord's Supper is a special meal that reminds us how much Jesus loves us. It's a time when Jesus is present. We tell Jesus that we love him. And if we love Jesus we will want to please him. The invitation tells us that we should be sorry about the bad things we have done or thought. Jesus wants us to love one another and try to live in peace with every one else. The invitation is asking us if we love Jesus and want to live to please him. If we love Jesus and want to live like he wants us to, then we are welcome to join in the Lord's Supper.

6. Hymn Sing

According to Thy Gracious Word (*Resource O 12*)

7. Activity

Have the children do the matching game (*Resource A - 3a*). Explain that the words on the left are taken from the Invitation and the ones on the right tell what those words mean. Match the words from the invitation with their proper meaning. Younger children will probably need some assistance.

8. The Liturgy

So far we have practiced the Invitation, the General Confession, the Lord's Prayer, the Affirmation of Faith, the Collect, the Sanctus, and the Gloria Patri. Today we will add the final two prayers of the liturgy to our practice. Let's start with the Lord's Prayer today.

Resource O - 3 The Lord's Prayer

Resource O - 6 The Sanctus

Resource O - 7 The Gloria Patri

The Prayer for Spiritual Communion asks God to help us become more like Jesus when we take Communion.

Resource O - 8 The Prayer for Spiritual Communion

In the prayer of the Consecration of the Elements the pastor asks God to meet us in a special way as we obey him by eating this meal.

Resource O - 9 The Prayer of Consecration of the Elements

Summary

Now we have talked about all the prayers in our Communion Service ritual. Let's review them.

Resource O - 11 The Communion Liturgy

9. Wrap Up

Jesus wants everyone to follow him. But we have to do what Jesus asks if we want to follow him. Jesus asks us to admit we have done wrong, ask him to forgive us, and then ask him to come into our lives and be our leader. Jesus invites all of us who want to follow him to eat this special meal. We shouldn't eat the Lord's Supper if we do not want to obey God. Next week during our class we will make Communion bread. Please bring an apron to wear.

Hand out a picture of Zacchaeus (*Resource O - 10*) and a copy of the Wordmaze to each child (*Resource A - 4a* or *Resource A - 4b*). *Resource A - 4a* is designed for the older children. *Resource A - 4b* should be given to the younger children. Solutions to these puzzles are found in *Resource A - 4c* and *Resource A - 4d*. You may wish to offer a prize to the children who bring their completed Wordmaze with them for the next meeting.

Lesson Five Review and Questions

Outline

1. Introduction
2. Retell story from Lesson One
3. Activity Making Communion bread
4. Questions about Communion
5. Preparation of Communion Elements
6. Closing Words

Lesson Objectives

To help the children review and

- understand why they take Communion
- experience their importance as contributing, participating members of the church family
- make Communion bread and prepare the elements.

Materials

Materials for Jesus' Last Passover story

Green underlay, 45cm by 122cm (18" x 48")

Wooden figures of Jesus and the twelve disciples

Wooden table, 8 by 22 by 5 cm high (3" x 8 " x 2")

Basket for figures (18cm/ 7")

Backdrop for upper room: centre part, 18 x 36 cm (7" x 14"); each end, 18 x 10 cm (7" x 4")

Small plate with plasticine loaf of unleavened bread

Small chalice

Basket (8 cm / 3") for plate, chalice, and bread

Tray for materials

Materials for baking

cookie sheets

flour

butter/margarine

condensed milk

sugar

bowls for mixing (one per child)

spoons for mixing (one per child)

pizza cutter

rolling pin

brush (to use in greasing cookie sheets)

measuring utensils

aprons (for children who forget to bring one)

Materials for Communion

Communion set

bread

juice

tablecloth

Introduction

Welcome, boys and girls. Today is the final day of our lessons on Communion. We have learned that Jesus gave us Communion to help us remember what he did for us when he died on the cross. He gave us Communion as a means of grace - something that helps us grow to be more like him. And he gave us Communion to help us look ahead to heaven and be ready for him when he returns. Today will be a very special day because we are going to make Communion bread. And we will give you the chance to ask any questions you may have about Communion. But first, let's gather round for our story.

The Lesson

Jesus' Last Passover Matthew 26:26-28

(This story is taken from Young Children and Worship by Stewart & Berryman, with some minor changes)

Place the tray with the materials for Jesus' Last Passover on the story table. Sit quietly while you feel the story forming in you. Then roll out the green felt underlay and smooth it, as you say:

Once every year, the people of God

Place the disciples on the underlay so they are in three rows, four figures abreast, as you slowly continue:

go up to Jerusalem to celebrate the feast of the Passover
to remember how God led them out of Egypt and through the Red
Sea to freedom. Every year Jesus

Present Jesus and place him to your right, facing the disciples, so they block his movement.

celebrated the Passover feast in Jerusalem with his family and friends.

Motion over the heads of the disciples.

But this year Jesus' friends did not want to go. They were afraid. They said to Jesus, "Don't go. People in Jerusalem want to kill you."

Pause.

But Jesus said, "We must go."

Move Jesus toward you and around the disciples, stopping him about six inches before you get to the space where the backdrop will go. So that you will only have to move three pairs of disciples, move two from each of the ends closest to you so they are lined up behind Jesus in twos.

When the day of Passover came, some of Jesus' friends went to an upper room

Place the upper room backdrop near the end of the underlay to your left.

and prepared the feast.

Place the table in front of the backdrop. Put the plate with unleavened bread (plasticine) on the table, and then the cup.

When evening came, Jesus

Move Jesus to the upper room by going in front of the table and then around to the centre back. Follow with the disciples as you say:

and his friends went to the upper room to celebrate the feast of the Passover. They were still afraid.

When all are around the table, say:

While they were eating the Passover Jesus

Touch Jesus

said the words of the feast in a way they had never heard before. Jesus took the bread

With both hands, lift the bread straight up and hold it.

and blessed it

Place your hand over it like a blessing.

and broke it

Break it in two

and gave it to them, saying,

As you lower your hands with the broken bread, reach out to the two disciples facing Jesus and offer it to them, as you say:

"Take. Eat. This is my body, given for you. Do this in remembrance of me."

Continue around the circle as you say this. Then place the bread on the plate.

Then Jesus took the cup

Lift the cup straight up with two hands.

and said, "Drink this, all of you. This is my blood which is shed for you and for many for the remission of sins. Do this in remembrance of me."

Lower the cup and pass it to each disciple. Pause and sit back. Then say:

Then they sang a hymn and went out to a garden to pray.

Move Jesus and disciples out, behind the backdrop so they can't be seen.

Then it happened. People who didn't like Jesus took him. They wouldn't let him go. Later they nailed him to a cross to kill him. Jesus died. It was very sad.

Pause for a moment.

But three days later God did an amazing thing. God made Jesus alive again.

Pause for a moment and look at the table.

So, every time we eat this bread

Touch the bread.

and drink this cup

Touch the cup.

we remember Jesus, that he died for our sins, and that God made him alive again.

Responding to God's Word: Wondering Together

I wonder how it felt to be around this table and hear Jesus say, "Take. Eat. This is my body given for you"?

I wonder how the disciples felt eating the bread and drinking from the cup?
...

I wonder how they felt when Jesus died? . . . (show picture of Jesus on the cross)

I wonder how they felt when they heard God made Jesus alive? . . .

I wonder where you think about Jesus dying for you . . .

I wonder if you remember Jesus when you are close to a table like this? .
..

I wonder if you feel close to Jesus when you are close to a table like this?
...

I wonder if you remember Jesus will come again ? . . .

2. Activity - Making Communion Bread

Children will assist in the preparation of the elements. The first step in this will be to make some Unleavened Communion Bread. The following recipe will make enough for about 12 - 15 people. Each child can make their own batch. What is not used for the Communion service to follow may either be sent home with the children or frozen for later use.

Recipe for Unleavened Communion Bread

Ingredients:

cup flour
1 teaspoon sugar
1 Tablespoon butter or margarine
1 Tablespoons milk
dash of salt

Mix well until you have a soft dough. If dough is quite sticky add a little more flour. Roll thin on a greased cookie sheet.

Mark in squares using a pizza cutter.

Bake at 350 fo 10 minutes.

While the bread is baking the children may assist with cleaning up. After bread is taken out, allow it to cool.

3. Hymn Sing

According to Thy Gracious Word (*Resource O - 12*)

4. Questions about Communion

Give the children opportunity to ask any questions they may have about the Lord's Supper. Two questions have been included here. They should be dealt with even if the children do not ask. It is important that they understand that the bread and juice only represent the body and blood of Jesus. Likewise, it is valuable for them to know why we go to the altar to receive the Lord's Supper. While it may not be essential, it does help them to develop an appreciation for the historic place of the altar in the Free Methodist Church.

A. Is the bread really Christ's body? Is the juice really Christ's blood?

In the Communion service we say things such as "the body of our Lord Jesus Christ" when we pass the bread and "the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ" when we pass the juice. Do you know what we mean when we say those words? Do we eat the body and blood of Jesus?

No, we don't eat the actual body and blood of Jesus. The bread is still bread and the juice is still juice. What we mean is those things represent Jesus' body and blood and help us remember what he did for us.

In our stories we have been using these wooden figures (point to a few). This one is Jesus. This one is Zacchaeus. Are these little wooden figures actually Jesus and Zacchaeus? (No) That's right, they only represent those people. When we look at a photograph we might ask, "Who is that person?" The person with the photo might say "That is my mother." Well, of course, it isn't really that person's mother. It's just a picture of the mother. It is like that with the bread and juice. They are just objects to help us think of Jesus and remember what he did for us.

B. Why do we go to the altar?

What do you think an altar is? - It's a place where we meet God. In the Old Testament the people built altars and placed their sacrifices for God on them. In Romans 12:1 we are told to "offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God." In the Old Testament people placed animals on the altar and killed them in sacrifice to God, either to ask for forgiveness of sin or to thank God for what he had done for them. Jesus died on the cross for our sins so we don't need an altar to offer sacrifice for our sins. Jesus did that once for all. We have altars in our churches as places to meet with God and to offer ourselves to God as living sacrifices. Communion is a very special time in which to do just that.

5. Preparation of the Communion Elements

Have the children assist in the preparation of the Communion elements and table.

6. Closing Words

Children, in a few minutes we will join the rest of the church for the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. Over the last month we have been learning about what makes Communion so special. This is a time when we remember Jesus. We remember that he died on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins. Because he died on the cross for us we can have our sins forgiven. If we admit we have sinned, ask Jesus to forgive us, and receive him into our hearts we will have a home in heaven.

The Lord's Supper is a means of grace also. When we take Communion sincerely and reverently, Jesus has promised to be present with us in a special way and help to feed us spiritually. This helps us grow strong on the inside.

And we learned that the Lord's Supper helps us remember Christ's promise to give us a home in heaven. Taking Communion helps to remind us that we are God's children and Jesus is coming back for us someday.

I hope that as you take Communion today you will sense Jesus there with you. I am praying that it will be a very special time for you.

Resource Materials

Overheads / Handouts

- O - 1 The Invitation
- O - 2 The General Confession
- O - 3 The Lord's Prayer
- O 4 Affirmation of Faith
- O 5 The Collect
- O 6 The Sanctus
- O - 7 The Gloria Patri
- O - 8 Prayer for Spiritual Communion
- O - 9 Prayer of Consecration of the Elements
- O - 10 The Benediction
- O - 11 The Communion Liturgy
- O - 12 Hymn "According to Thy Gracious Word" (Hymnal # 321)
- O - 13 Hymn "Amazing Grace" (Hymnal # 202)
- O - 14 Hymn "I Have Decided to Follow Jesus" (Hymnal # 376)
- O - 15 Jesus on the Cross
- O - 16 Good Shepherd
- O - 17 Jesus and the Heavenly Feast
- O - 18 Zaachaeus and Jesus

Activity Sheets

- A - 1a Lettermaze
- A - 1b Lettermaze for Younger Children
- A - 1c Lettermaze Solution
- A - 2 Draw a Picture of Heaven
- A 3a Matching Game
- A - 3b Matching Game Solution
- A - 4a Wordmaze
- A - 4b Wordmaze for Younger Children
- A - 4c Wordmaze Solution
- A - 4d Wordmaze for Younger Children Solution

Figures

- F 1 Figures Index
- F - 2 Figures 1 - 5
- F - 3 Figures 7 - 11
- F - 4 Figures 12 - 16
- F - 5 Figures 17 - 22
- F - 6 Figures 23 - 26
- F - 8 Figures 27 - 29
- F - 9 Figures 30 - 31
- F - 10 Figures 32 - 35

The Invitation

You who truly and earnestly
repent of your sins,
who live in love and
peace with your neighbours,
and who intend to lead a new life,
following the commandments of God,
and walking in His holy ways,
draw near with faith,
and take this holy sacrament
to your comfort; and,
humbly kneeling,
make your honest confession
to Almighty God.

The General Confession

Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, maker of all things, judge of all men, we confess that we have sinned, and we are deeply grieved as we remember the wickedness of our past lives. We have sinned against You, Your holiness, and Your love, and we deserve only Your indignation and anger.

We sincerely repent, and we are genuinely sorry for all wrongdoing and every failure to do the things we should. Our hearts are grieved, and we acknowledge that we are hopeless without Your grace.

Have mercy upon us.

Have mercy upon us, most merciful Father, for the sake of Your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ, who died for us.

Forgive us.

Cleanse us.

Give us strength to serve and please You in newness of life and to honour and praise Your name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father which art in heaven,
Hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come.

Thy will be done in earth,
as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts,
as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation,
but deliver us from evil:

For thine is the kingdom,
and the power,
and the glory,
for ever.

Amen.

The Affirmation of Faith

O Almighty God, our Heavenly Father,
who with great mercy has promised
forgiveness to all who turn to You
with hearty repentance and true faith,
have mercy upon us,
pardon and deliver us from our sins,
make us strong and faithful
in all goodness,
and bring us to everlasting life,
through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen.

The Collect

Almighty God,
unto whom all hearts are opened,
all desires known,
and from whom no secrets are hid:
cleanse the thoughts of our hearts,
by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit,
that we may perfectly love You,
and worthily magnify Your holy name,
through Christ our Lord.
Amen.

The Sanctus

It is always right and proper, and our moral duty, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, O Lord, holy Father, Almighty and Everlasting God.

Therefore, with angels and archangels, and with all the inhabitants of heaven, we honour and adore Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying,

Holy, Holy, Holy,
Lord God of hosts!
Heaven and earth
are full of Thy glory.
Glory be to thee,
O Lord, most high.
Amen.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

The Gloria Patri

Glory be to the Father
And to the Son
And to the Holy Ghost:
As it was in the beginning,
Is now, and ever shall be,
World without end.
Amen. Amen.

The Prayer for Spiritual Communion

We do not come to this Your table,
O merciful Lord,
with self-confidence and pride,
trusting in our own righteousness,
but we trust in Your great and many mercies.
We are not worthy to gather
the crumbs from under Your table.
But You, O Lord, are unchanging in Your mercy,
and Your nature is love;
grant us, therefore, God of mercy, God of grace,
so to eat at this Your table
that we may receive in spirit and in truth
the body of Your dear Son, Jesus Christ,
and the merits of His shed blood,
so that we may live and grow in His likeness, and,
being washed and cleansed
through His most precious blood,
we may evermore live in Him and He in us.
Amen.

The Prayer of Consecration of the Elements

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, who gave in love Your only Son, Jesus Christ, to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption, who by His sacrifice, offered once for all, did provide a full, perfect, and sufficient atonement for the sins of the whole world, we come now to Your table in obedience to Your Son, Jesus Christ, who in His holy gospel commanded us to continue a perpetual memory of His precious death until He comes again. Hear us, O merciful Father, we humbly ask, and grant that we receiving this bread and this cup, as He commanded and in memory of His passion and death, may partake of His most blessed body and blood.

In the night of His betrayal, Jesus took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to His disciples, saying, "Take, eat; this is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me."

In like manner, after supper He took the cup. and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, "Drink of this, all of you, for this is My blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you and for many, for the remission of sins; do this as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." Amen.

The Benediction

May the peace of God
which passes all understanding,
keep your hearts and minds
in the knowledge and love of God,
and of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord;
and may the blessing of God Almighty,
the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit,
be yours now and forever.
Amen.

The Communion Liturgy

THE INVITATION

Tells us who may take Communion.

THE GENERAL CONFESSION

We admit we disobeyed God
and ask him to forgive us.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

It is Jesus' example to us of how we should pray

THE AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Thanks to God for forgiveness

THE COLLECT

Asks God to make us clean on the inside.

THE SANCTUS

We praise God for being holy or pure

THE GLORIA PATRI

We praise God for being a promise keeper

PRAYER FOR SPIRITUAL COMMUNION

Asks God to help us become more like
Jesus when we take Communion

CONSECRATION OF THE ELEMENTS

We ask God to meet us in a special way as
we obey him by eating this meal.

BENEDICTION

A special prayer of blessing given
at the end of the service.

According to Thy Gracious Word

According to Thy gracious word,
In meek humility,
This will I do, my dying Lord:
I will remember Thee.

Thy body, broken for my sake,
My bread from heaven shall be;
Thy testamental cup I take,
And thus remember Thee.

When to the cross I turn mine eyes
And rest on Calvary,
O Lamb of God, my sacrifice,
I must remember Thee.

Motions for the Hymn "According to Thy Gracious Word"

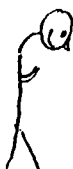
Verse 1

According to
thy gracious word



*Hands together, palms
up to form book*

In meek
humility



*Hands folded in
prayer, head bowed*

This will I do
my dying Lord



*Hands & arms
outstretched*

I will remember
Thee (each verse)



*Touch finger to temple
then point to heaven*

Verse 2

Thy body broken
for my sake



*Hands together holding
bread, then move as if*

My bread from
heav'n shall be



*Arms raised then
gradually brought
breaking it down*

Thy testamental cup
I take



*Hands cupped as if
holding chalice
Slowly raise*

Verse 3

When to the cross
I turn my eyes



*Arms crossed to form
shape of cross then
turn head to one side*

And rest on Calvary



*Hands together under
ear & head laid to
side as if resting*

O Lamb of God
my sacrifice



*Hands and arms
outstretched*

Amazing Grace

Amazing grace! how sweet the sound -
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost but now am found,
Was blind but now I see.

'Twas grace that taught my heart to fear,
And grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that grace appear
The hour I first believed.

The Lord has promised good to me,
His word my hope secures;
He will my shield and portion be
As long as life endures.

Thru many dangers, toils and snares,
I have already come;
'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.

When we've been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun,
We've no less days to sing God's praise
Than when we'd first begun.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

O - 14

I Have Decided to Follow Jesus

I have decided to follow Jesus,
I have decided to follow Jesus,
I have decided to follow Jesus,
No turning back, no turning back.

The world behind me, the cross before me;
The world behind me, the cross before me;
The world behind me, the cross before me,
No turning back, no turning back.

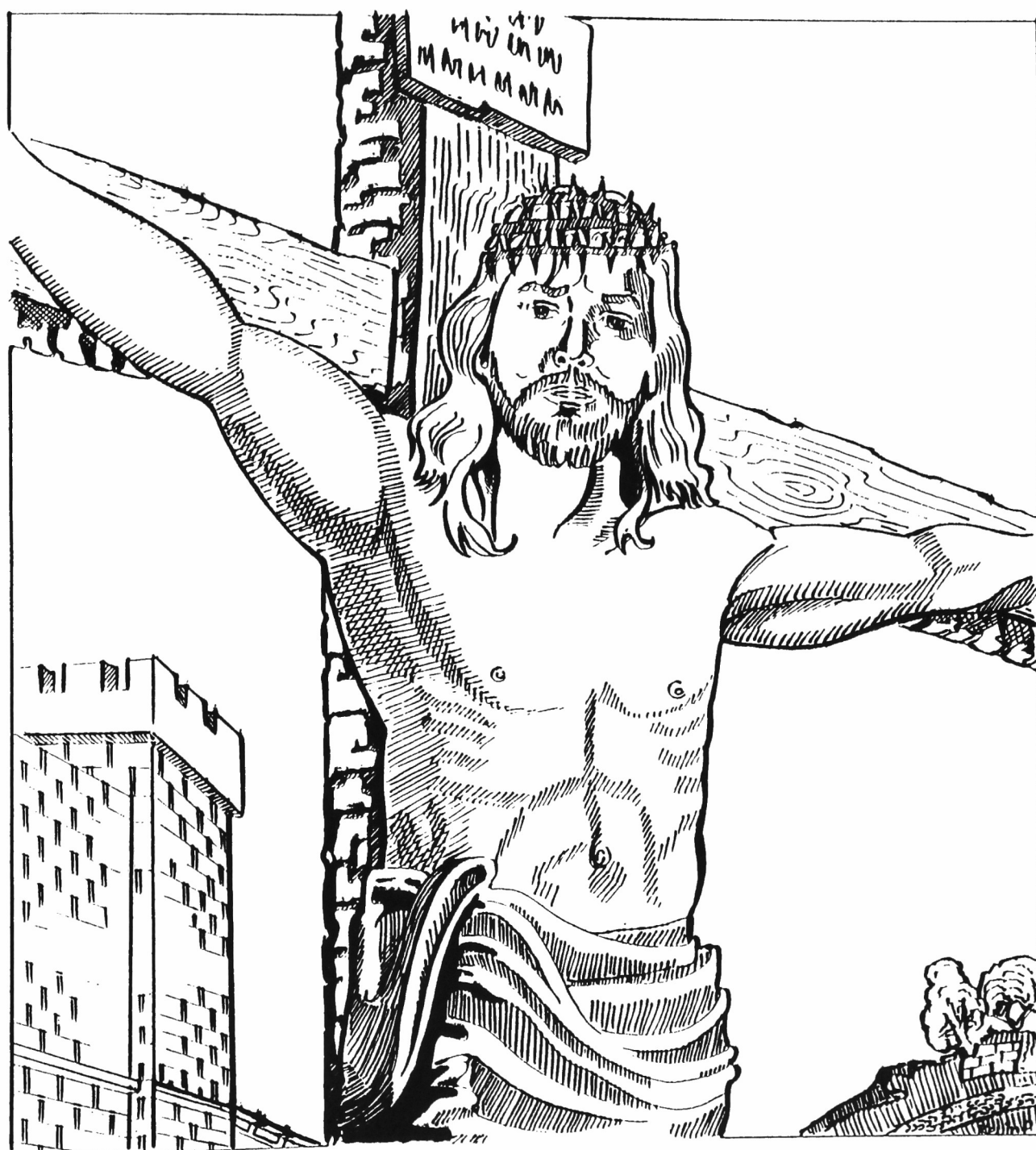
Though none go with me, I still will follow,
Though none go with me, I still will follow,
Though none go with me, I still will follow,
No turning back, no turning back.

Will you decide now to follow Jesus?
Will you decide now to follow Jesus?
Will you decide now to follow Jesus?
No turning back, no turning back.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

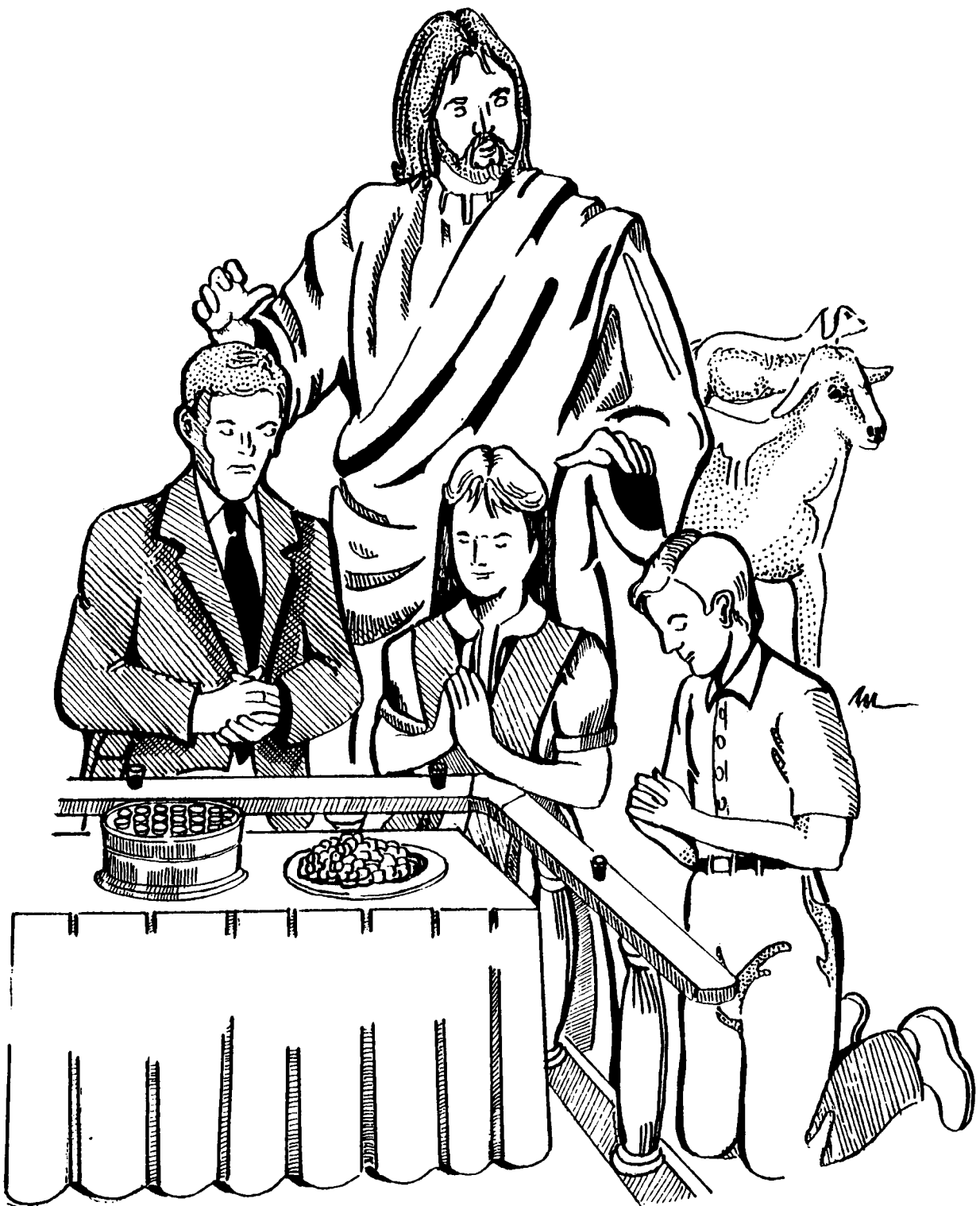
O - 15

Jesus On the Cross



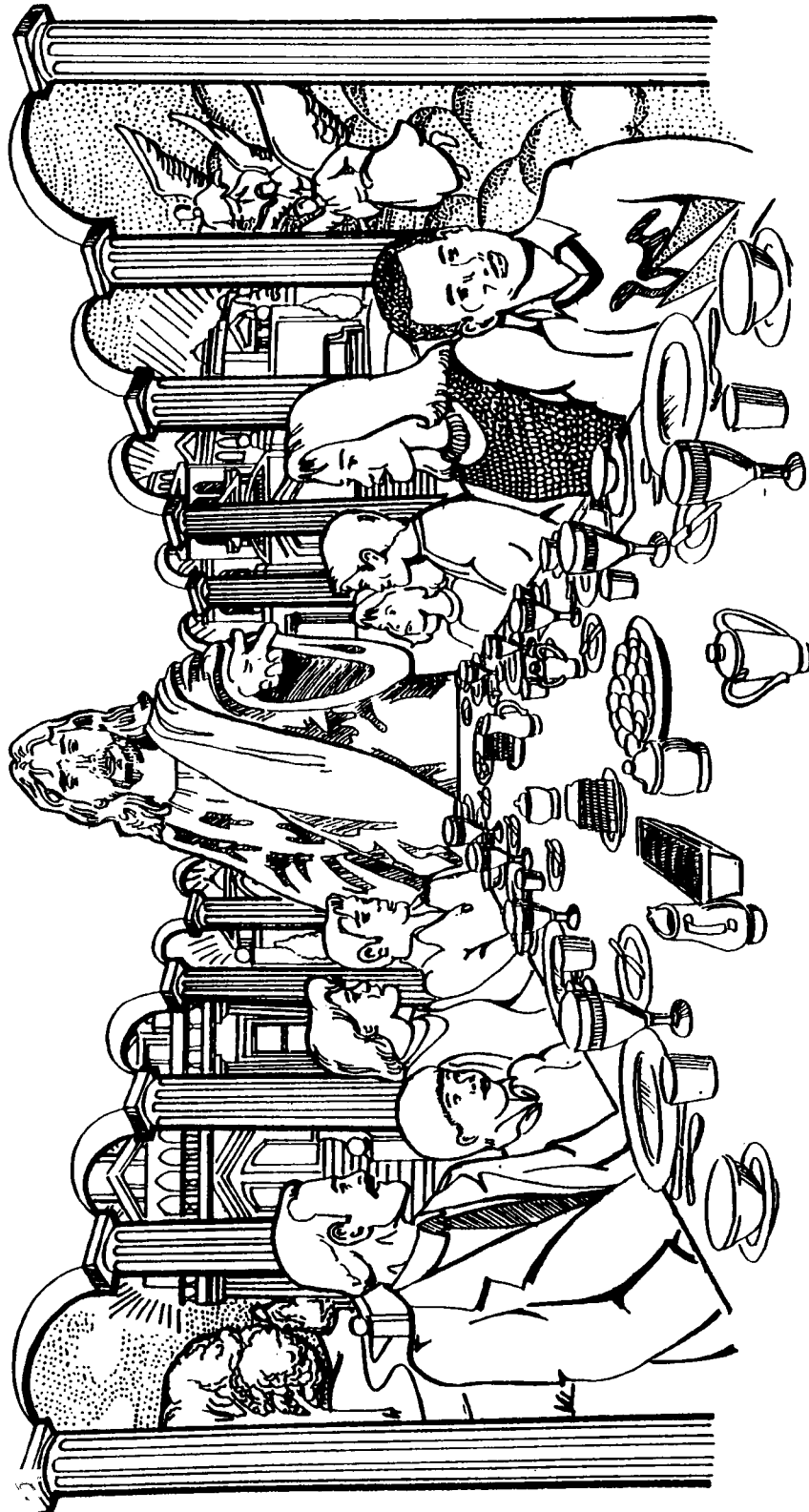
The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper
The Good Shepherd

O - 16



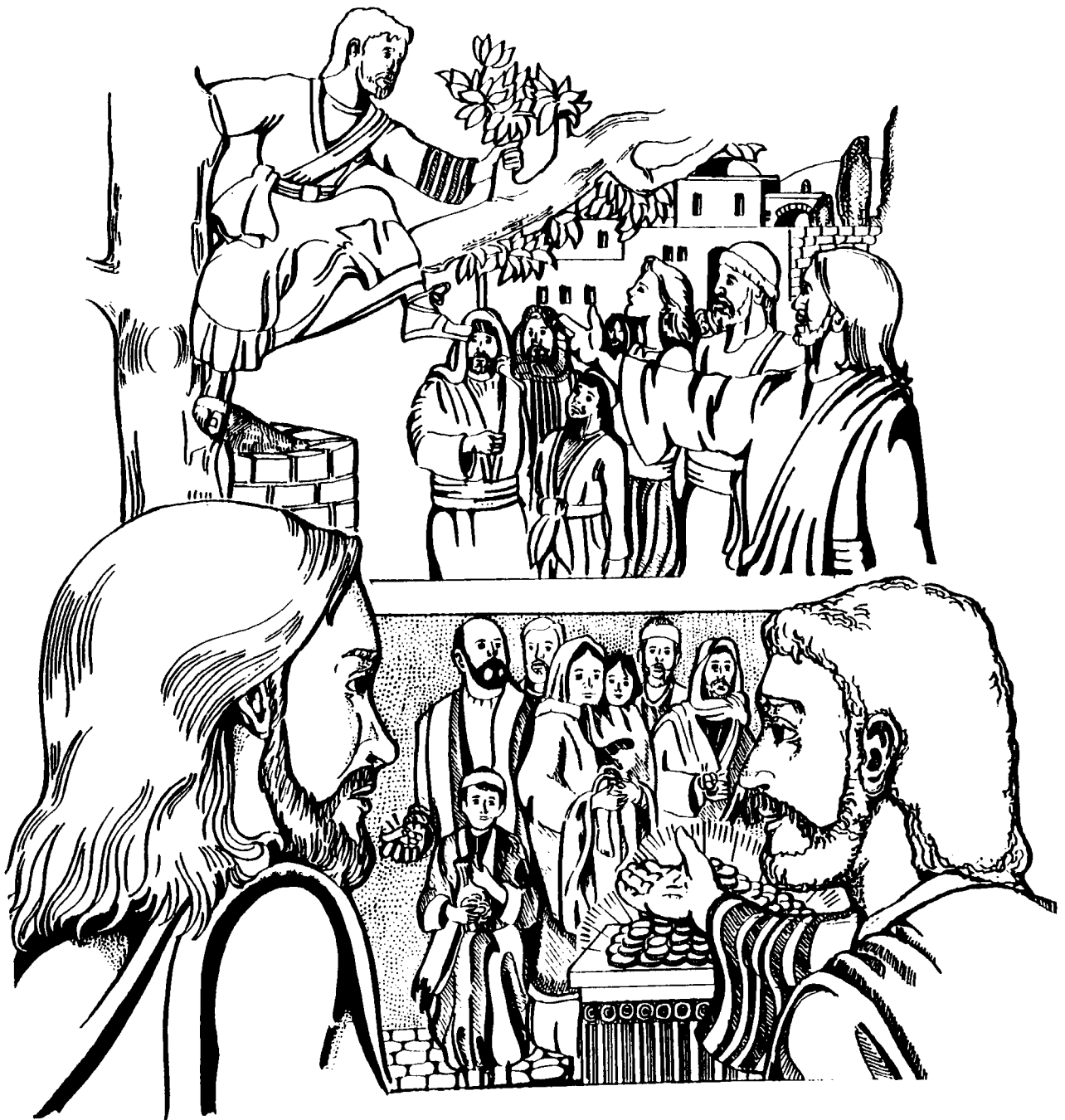
The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper
Jesus and the Heavenly Feast

O - 17



The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper
Jesus and Zacchaeus

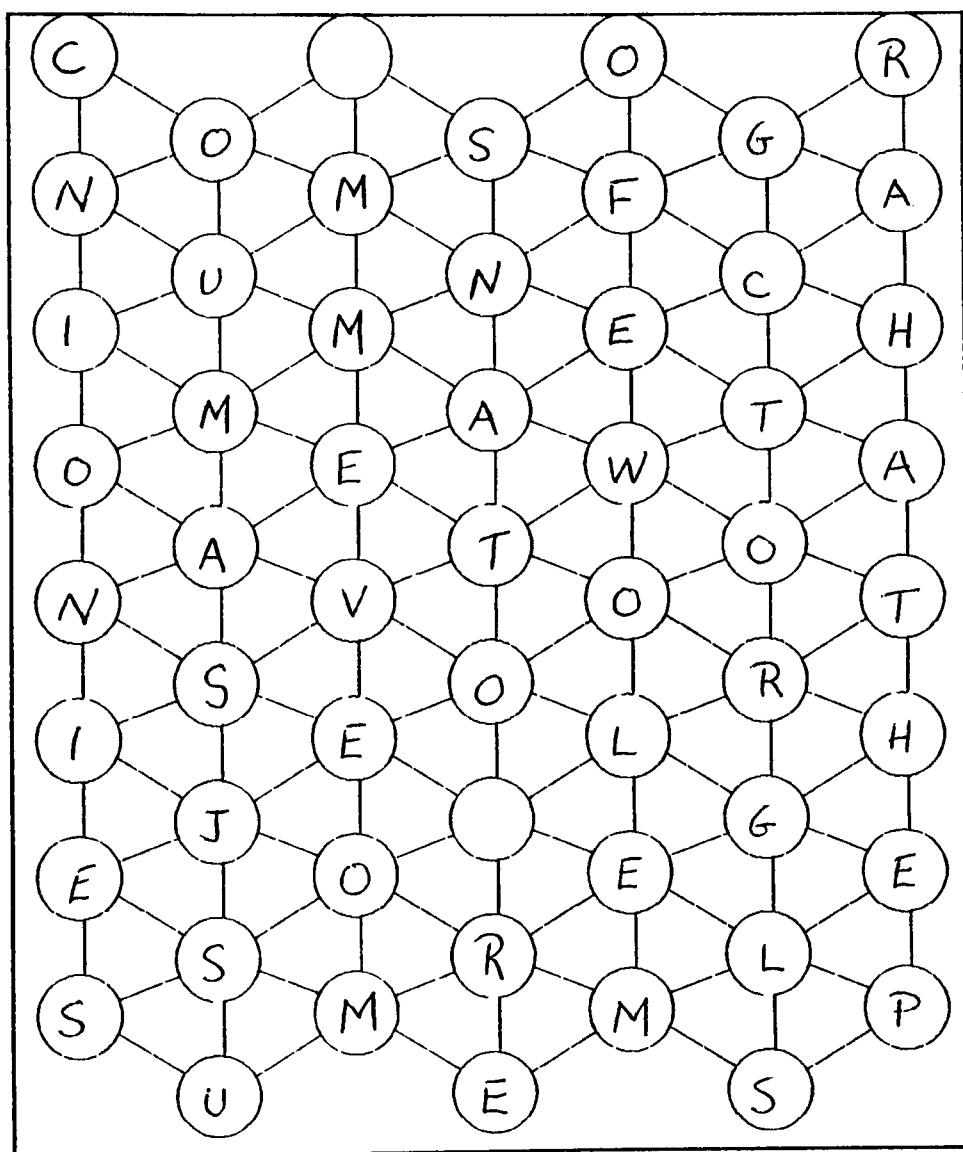
O - 18



The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

A - 1

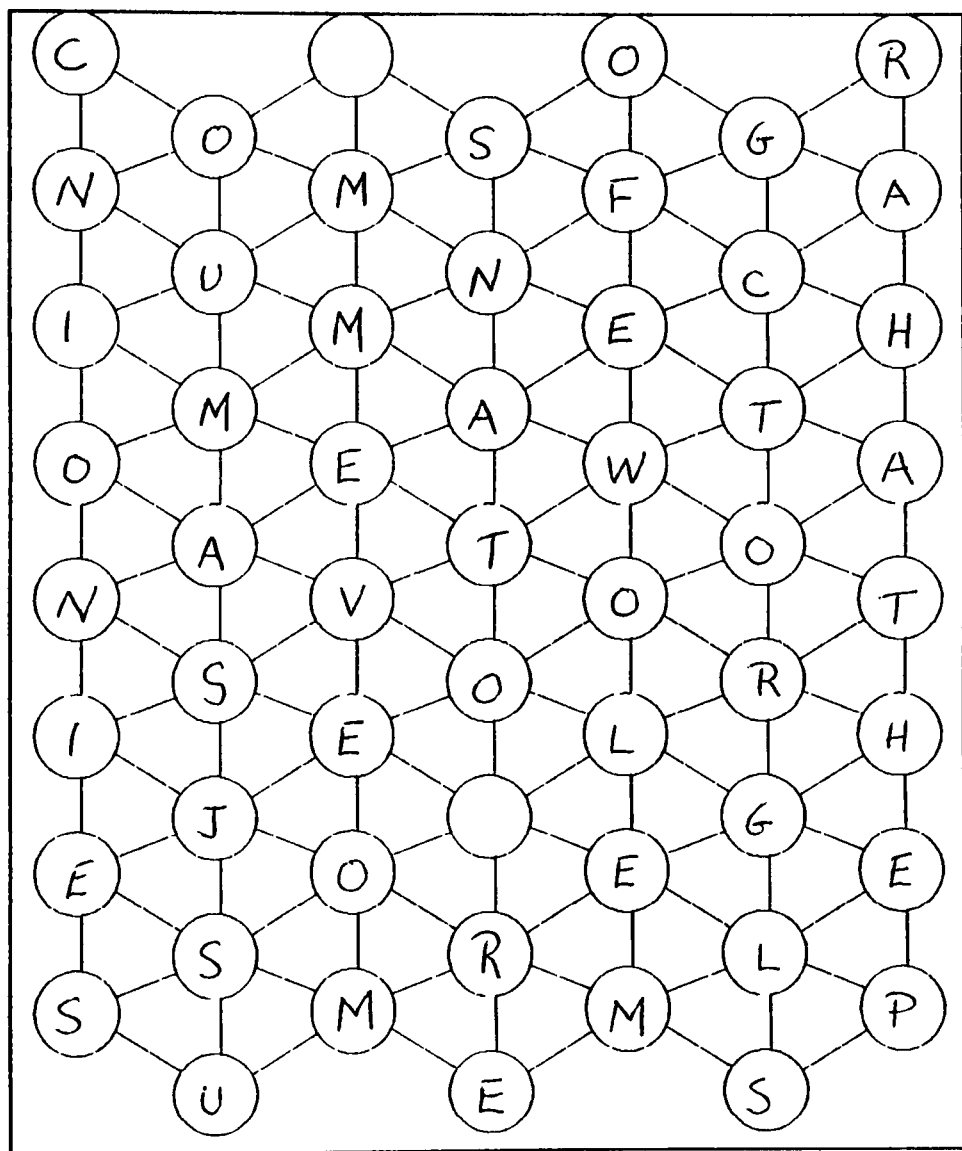
LETTER MAZE



Find your way through the Letter Maze then write the solution in the blanks below.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

A - 1b

LETTER MAZE

Find your way through the Letter Maze then write the solution in the blanks below.

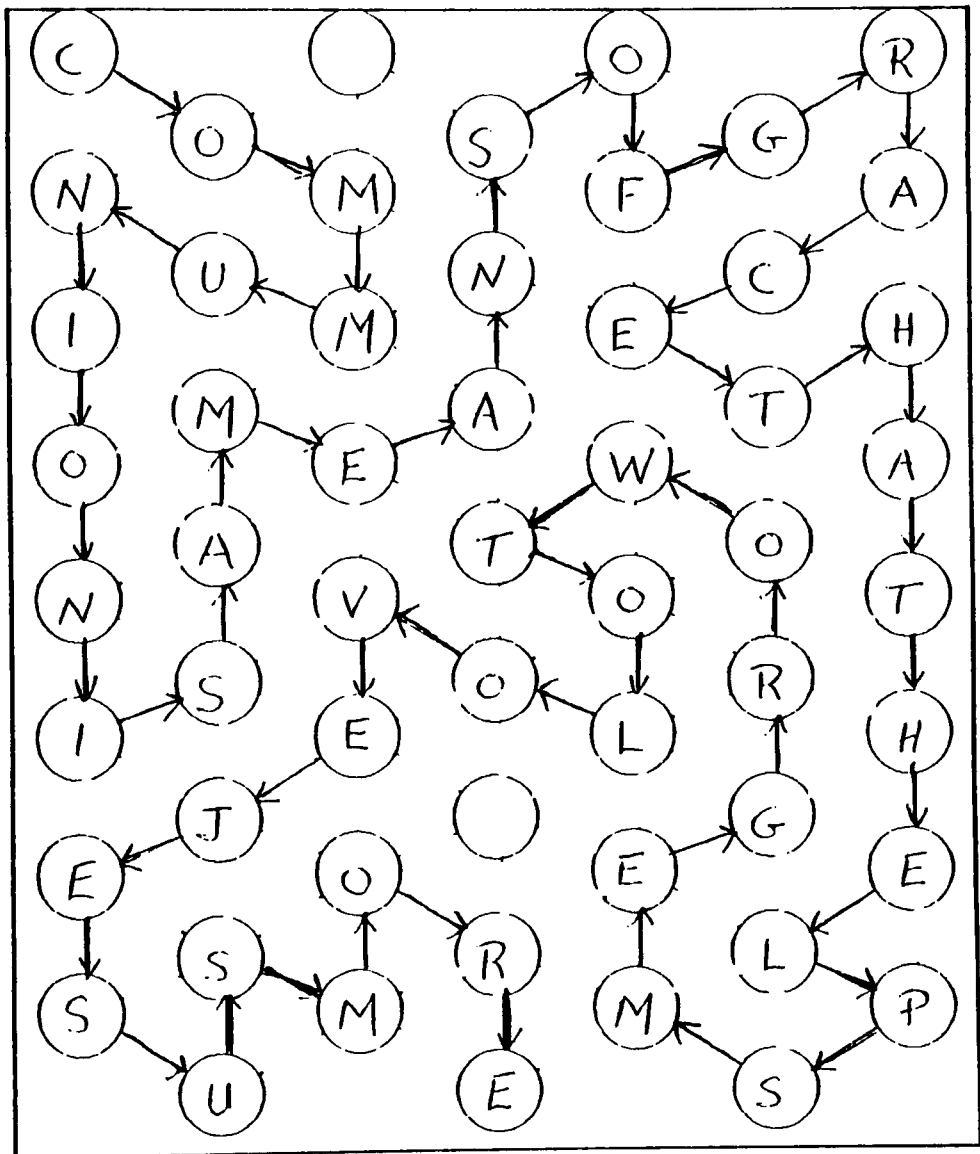
C O M M U N I O N I S A M E A N S O F

G R A C E T H A T H E L P S M E G R O W

T O L O V E J E S U S M O R E

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

A 1c

LETTER MAZE - Solution

Find your way through the Letter Maze then write the solution in the blanks below.

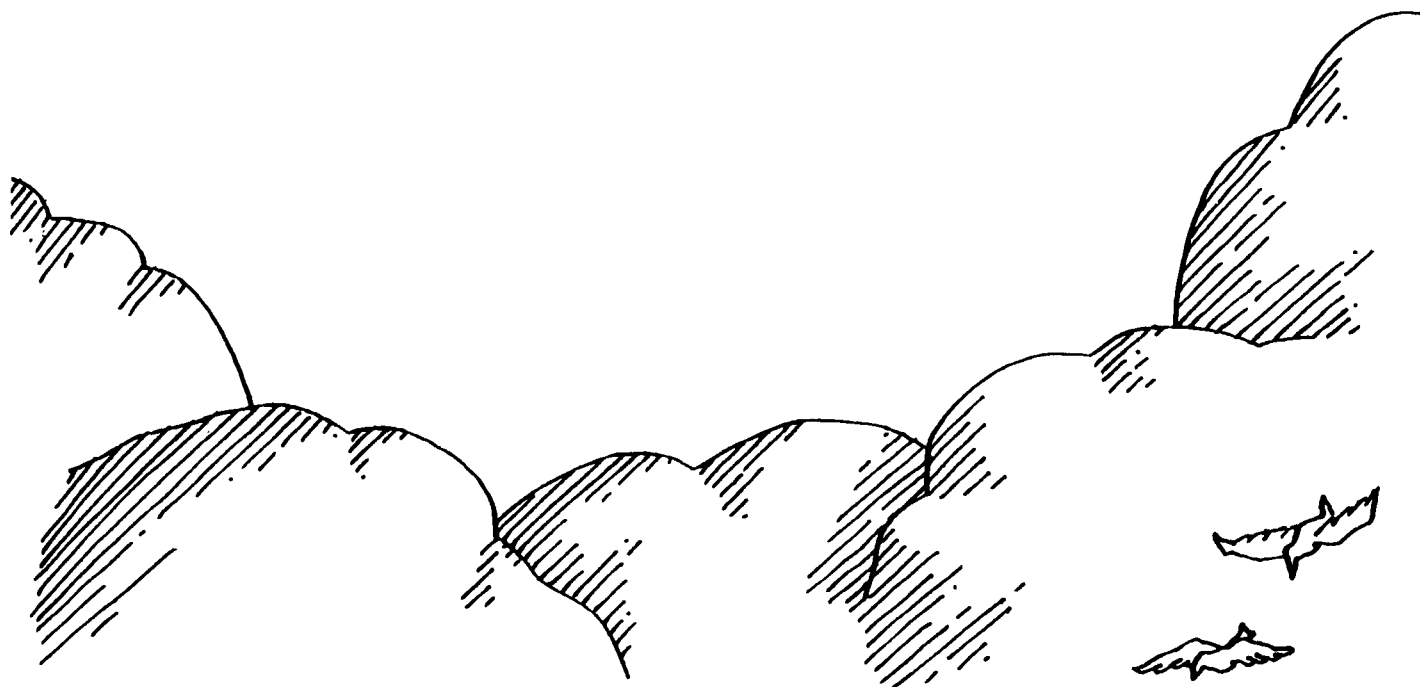
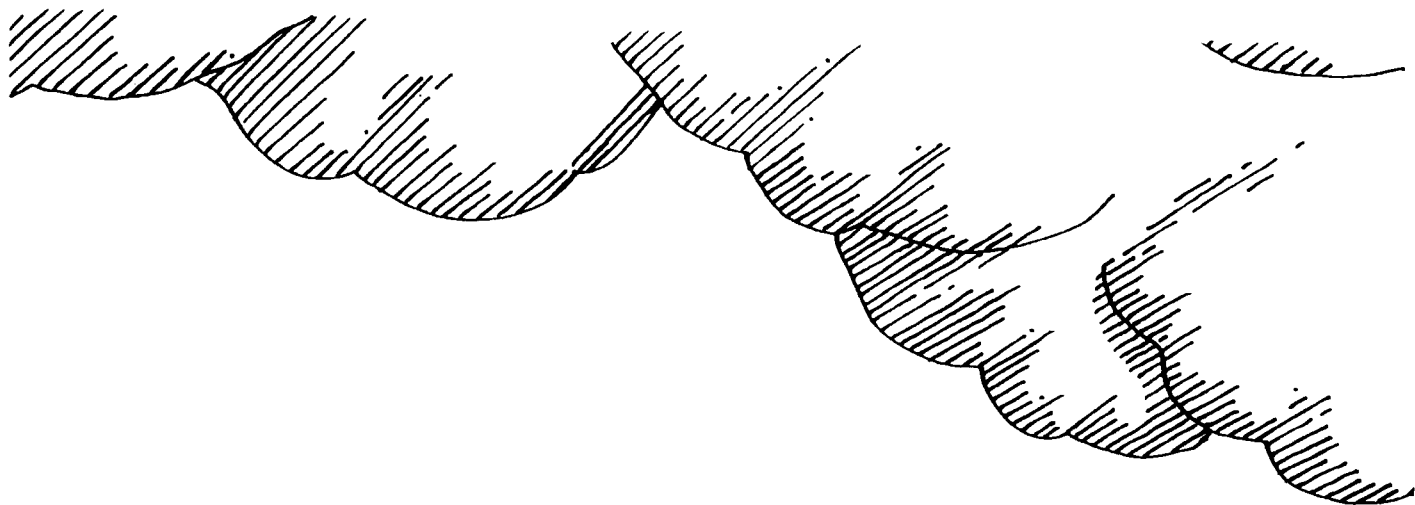
C O M M U N I O N I S A M E A N S O F

G R A C E T H A T H E L P S M E G R O W

T O L O V E J E S U S M O R E

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

A - 2



You are taking a walk through heaven. What does it look like?

"Into You I will lift up my eyes, O You who dwell in the heavens."

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

A 3a

Matching Game

Match the words used in the Invitation with their meaning.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Repent | Admit my need of God |
| 2. Sins | Anyone you know |
| 3. Love | Approach |
| 4. Peace | Believing what the God says is true |
| 5. Neighbour | Care about others |
| 6. Intend to lead a new life | Cheer up |
| 7. Following the commandments of God | Wrong things I do |
| 8. Walking in his holy ways | I won't fight about it |
| 9. Draw near | I'm sorry, I don't want to do it again |
| 10. Faith | Live like Jesus did |
| 11. Sacrament | Obey the Bible |
| 12. Comfort | Plan to do what pleases God |
| 13. Confession | Special meal of bread and juice |

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

A - 3b

Matching Game - Solution

Match the words used in the Invitation with their meaning.

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|
| 1. Repent | (13) Admit my need of God |
| 2. Sins | (5) Anyone you know |
| 3. Love | (9) Approach |
| 4. Peace | (10) Believing what the God says is true |
| 5. Neighbour | (3) Care about others |
| 6. Intend to lead a new life | (12) Cheer up |
| 7. Following the commandments of God | (2) Wrong things I do |
| 8. Walking in his holy ways | (4) I won't fight about it |
| 9. Draw near | (1) I'm sorry, I don't want to do it again |
| 10. Faith | (8) Live like Jesus did |
| 11. Sacrament | (7) Obey the Bible |
| 12. Comfort | (6) Plan to do what pleases God |
| 13. Confession | (11) Special meal of bread and juice |

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

A - 4a

WORDMAZE

The words to the invitation are hidden in this Wordmaze. Find the words in the Wordmaze

W	A	S	Q	M	Y	K	E	V	O	L	V
V	K	Q	I	P	I	S	N	O	P	B	K
C	O	M	M	A	N	D	M	E	N	T	S
H	S	H	T	I	A	F	A	O	E	O	H
A	T	A	S	N	Y	C	I	J	I	L	Y
K	D	M	C	Z	E	S	D	N	G	T	I
V	G	V	C	R	S	P	T	E	H	R	O
G	Y	Q	D	E	A	E	E	G	B	O	E
O	Y	U	F	Q	N	M	I	R	O	F	Z
D	L	N	M	D	S	M	E	M	U	M	U
D	O	E	F	I	L	W	E	N	R	O	S
C	H	S	I	A	X	H	R	X	T	C	E

Word List: Read the invitation and find the underlined words in the Wordmaze

You who truly and earnestly repent of your sins, who live in love and peace with your neighbour, and who intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking in His holy ways, draw near with faith, and take this holy sacrament to your comfort; and, humbly kneeling, make your honest confession to Almighty God.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

A - 4b

WORDMAZE

The words to the invitation are hidden in this Wordmaze. Find the words in the Wordmaze

C O M M A N D M E N T S
 O S H C O M F O R T O H
 N E W L I F E I H O L Y
 F A I T H E S P E A C E
 E G O D R S R E P E N T
 S A C R A M E N T B O E
 S I N S A L M I G H T Y
 I N T E N D M E L O V E
 O O E F O L W K N E E L
 N E I G H B O U R X O L

Word List: Read the invitation and find the underlined words in the Wordmaze

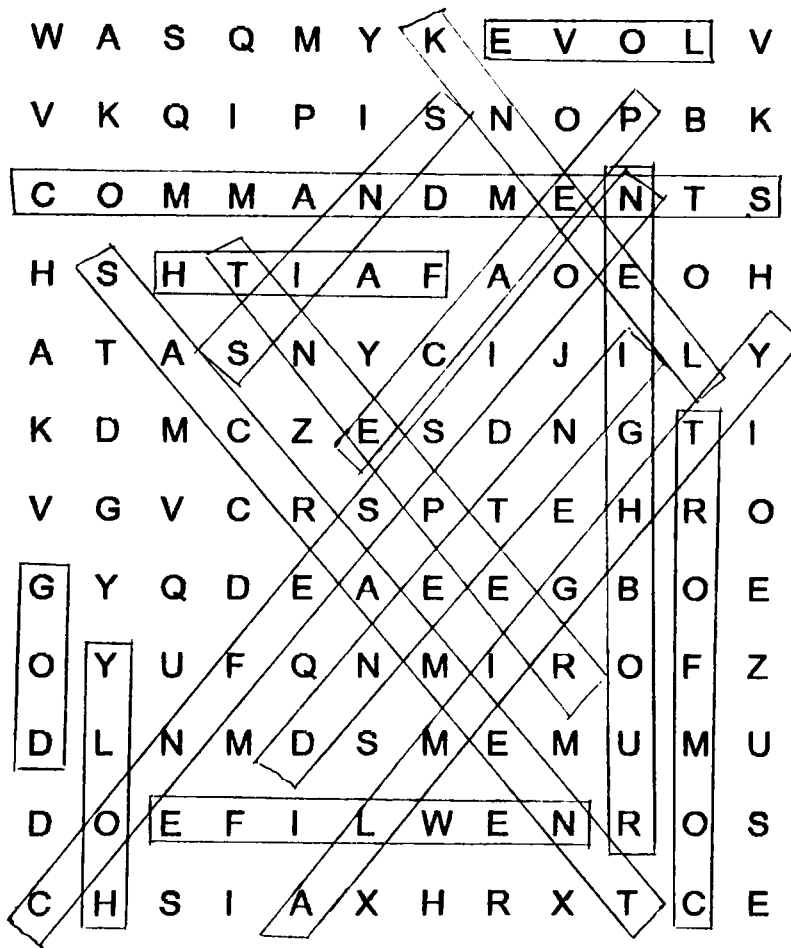
You who truly and earnestly repent of your sins, who live in love and peace
 with your neighbour, and who intend to lead a new life, following the
commandments of God, and walking in His holy ways, draw near with faith,
 and take this holy sacrament to your comfort; and, humbly kneeling, make your
 honest confession to Almighty God.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

A - 4c

WORDMAZE - Solution

The words to the invitation are hidden in this Wordmaze. Find the words in the Wordmaze



Word List: Read the invitation and find the underlined words in the Wordmaze

You who truly and earnestly repent of your sins, who live in love and peace with your neighbour, and who intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking in His holy ways, draw near with faith, and take this holy sacrament to your comfort; and, humbly kneeling, make your honest confession to Almighty God.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

A 4d

WORDMAZE -Solution

The words to the invitation are hidden in this Wordmaze. Find the words in the Wordmaze

C	O	M	M	A	N	D	M	E	N	T	S
O	S	H	C	O	M	F	O	R	T	O	H
N	E	W	L	I	F	E	I	H	O	L	Y
F	A	I	T	H	E	S	P	E	A	C	E
E	G	O	D	R	S	R	E	P	E	N	T
S	A	C	R	A	M	E	N	T	B	O	E
S	I	N	S	A	L	M	I	G	H	T	Y
I	N	T	E	N	D	M	E	L	O	V	E
O	O	E	F	O	L	W	K	N	E	E	L
N	E	I	G	H	B	O	U	R	X	O	L

Word List: Read the invitation and find the underlined words in the Wordmaze

You who truly and earnestly repent of your sins, who live in love and peace with your neighbour, and who intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking in His holy ways, draw near with faith, and take this holy sacrament to your comfort; and, humbly kneeling, make your honest confession to Almighty God.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

F 1

Wooden Figures

Using the patterns on the following pages cut out wooden figures.
Use wood at least 16mm (5/8") thick so that the figures will not fall over.

Lesson 1

Number

- | | |
|--------------|---------------|
| 1 - Jesus | 8 - Disciple |
| 2 - Disciple | 9 - Disciple |
| 3 - Disciple | 10 - Disciple |
| 4 - Disciple | 11 - Disciple |
| 5 - Disciple | 12 - Disciple |
| 6 - Disciple | 13 - Disciple |
| 7 - Disciple | |

Lesson 2

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| 14 Good Shepherd | 20 child, modern |
| 15 - sheep (make 5) | 21 child, modern |
| 16 - sheep (make 5) | 22 child, modern |
| 17 - pastor | 23 - adult, modern |
| 18 - child, modern | 24 adult, modern |
| 19 - child, modern | 25 adult, modern |
| | 26 adult, modern |

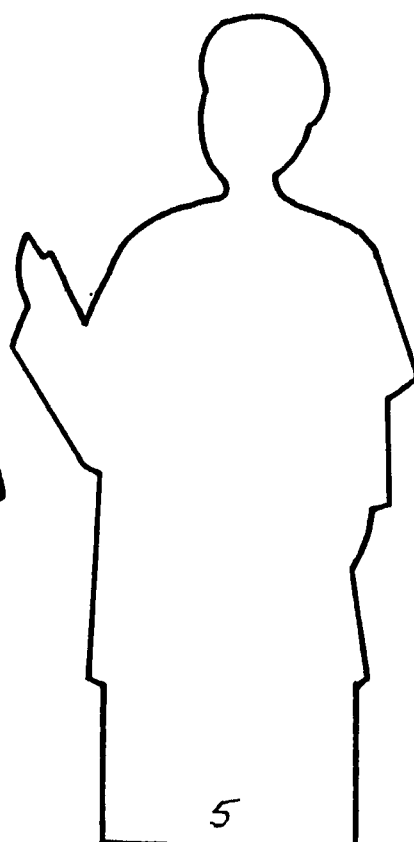
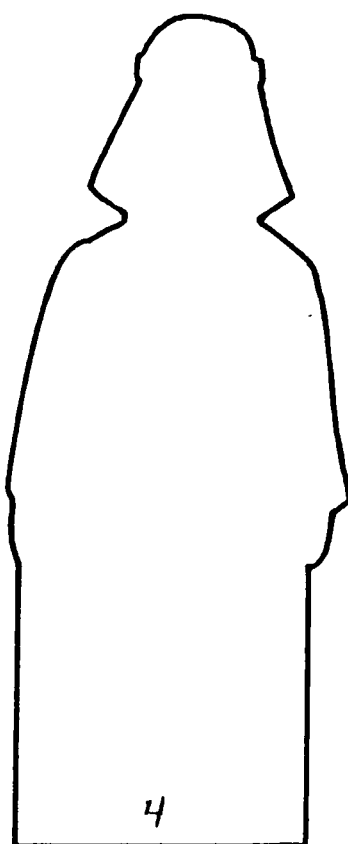
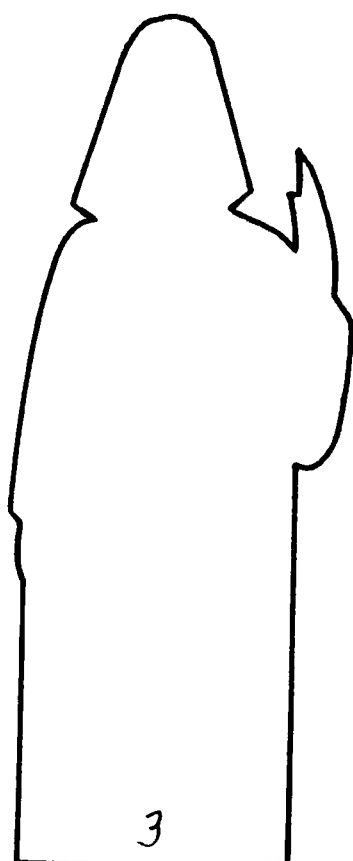
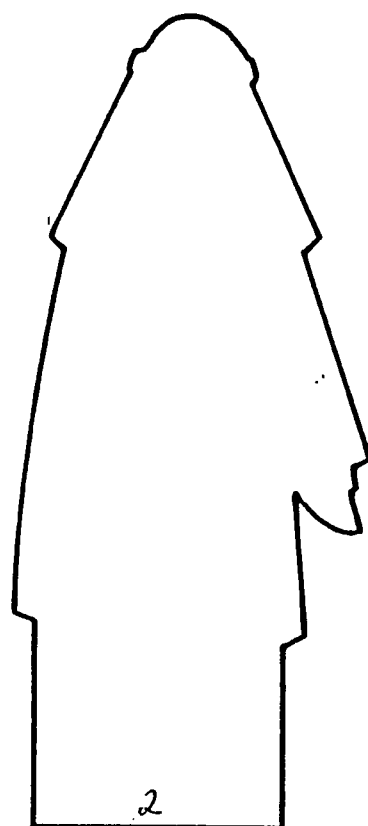
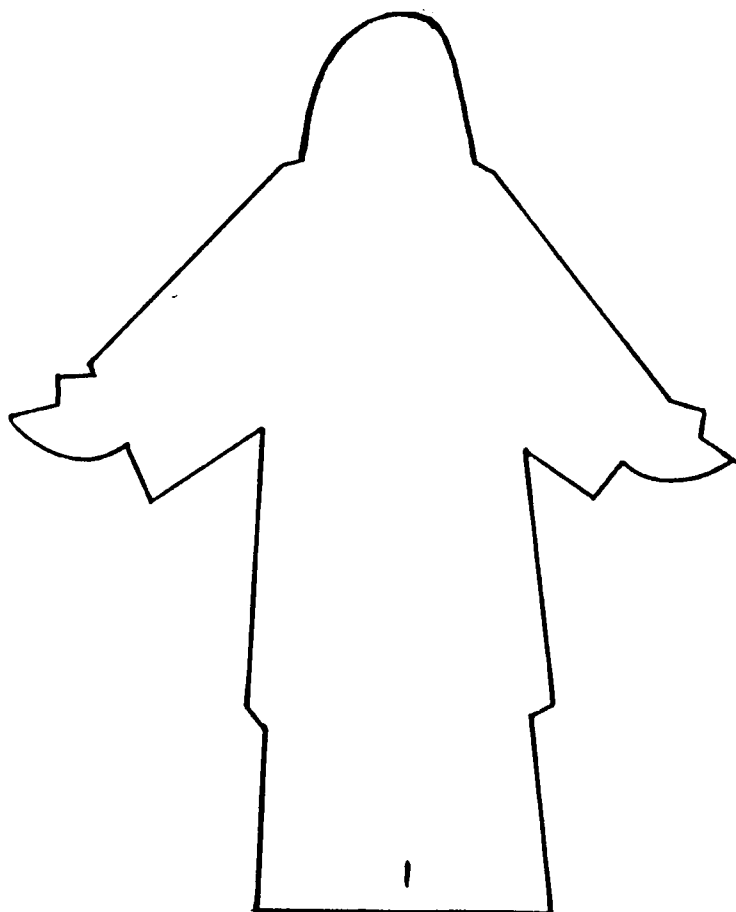
Lesson 4

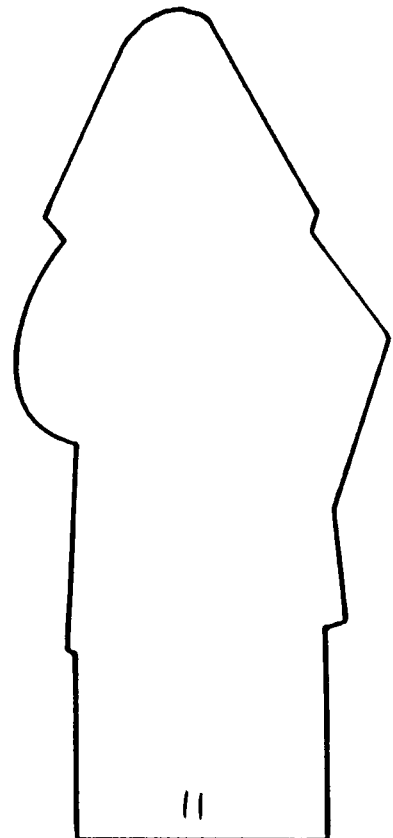
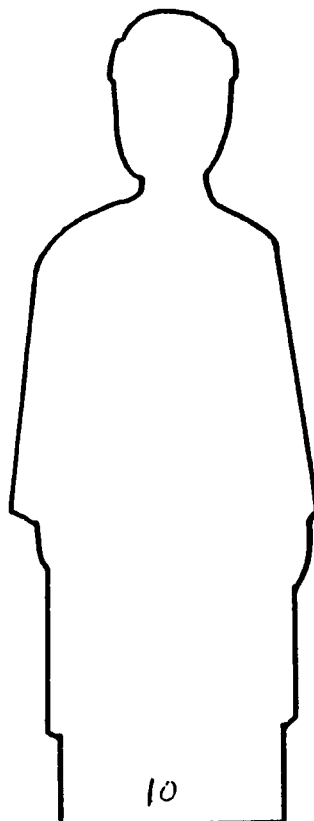
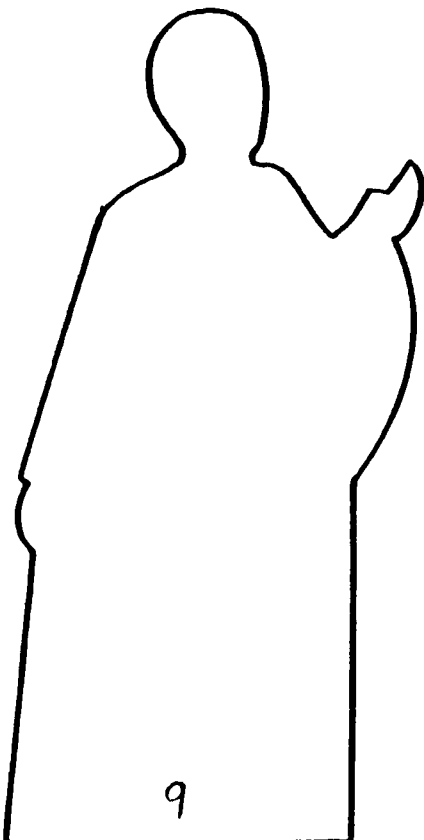
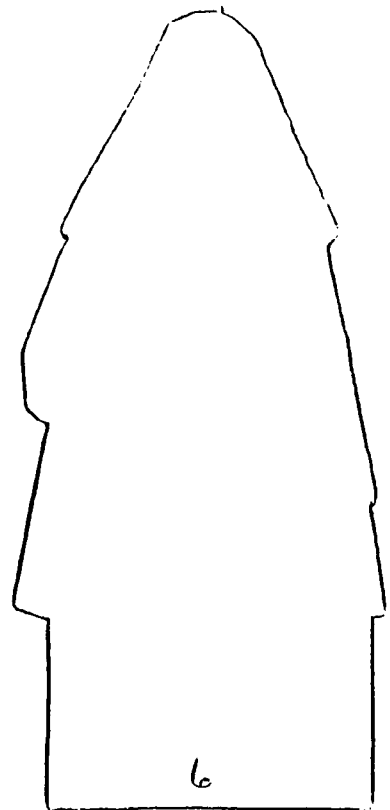
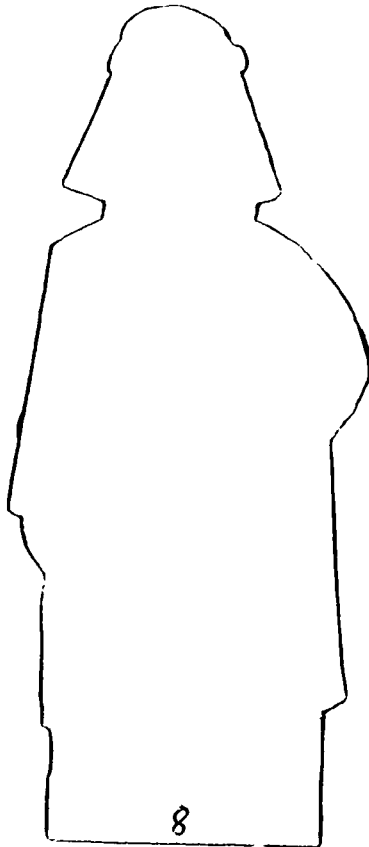
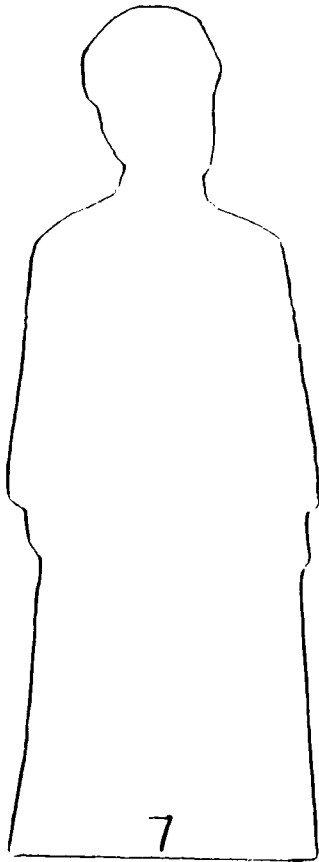
- | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 1 Jesus | 29 - Tree (glue to #30) |
| 7 Disciple | 30 - Tree (glue to #29) |
| 8 - Disciple | 31 - Zaachaeus |
| 9 Disciple | 32 - Zebedee |
| 10 - Disciple | 33 - Rich man |
| 11 - Disciple | 34 - Boat (glue to #35) |
| 27 People (make 3) | 35 - Boat (glue to #34) |
| 28 - People (make 3) | |

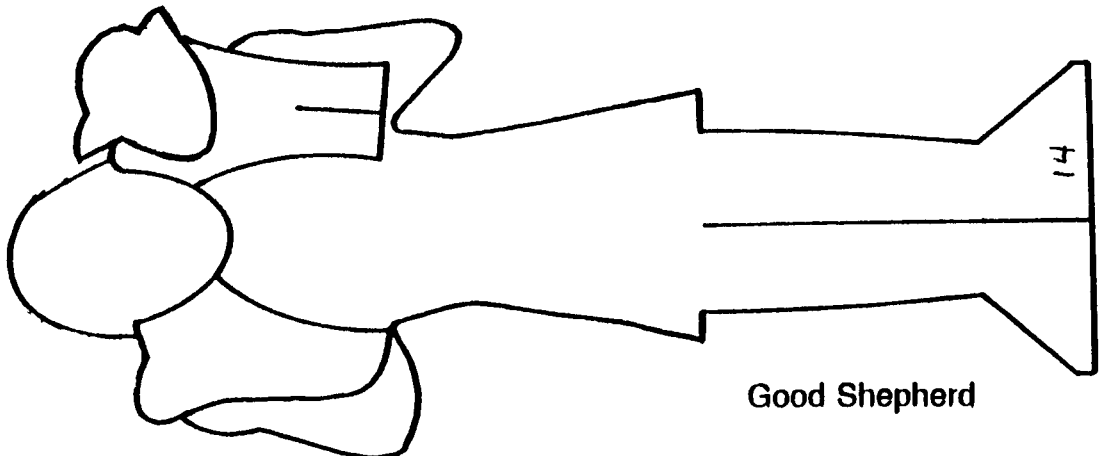
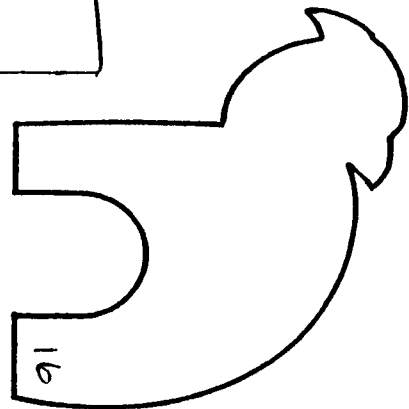
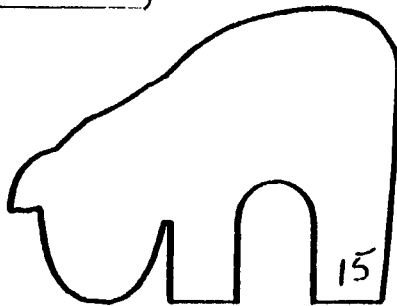
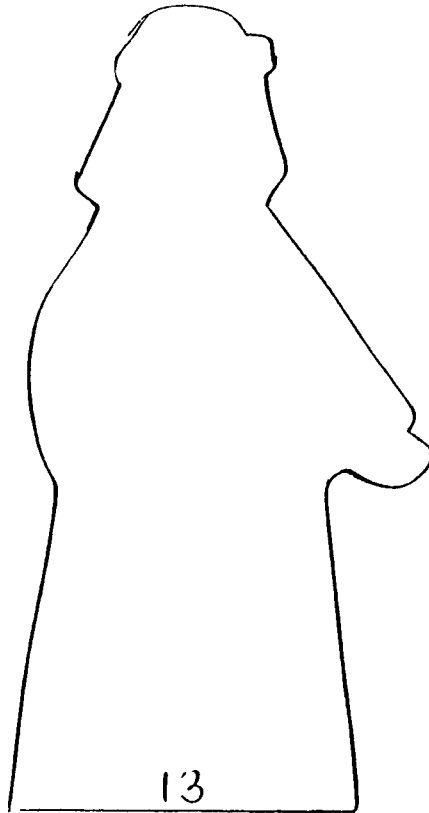
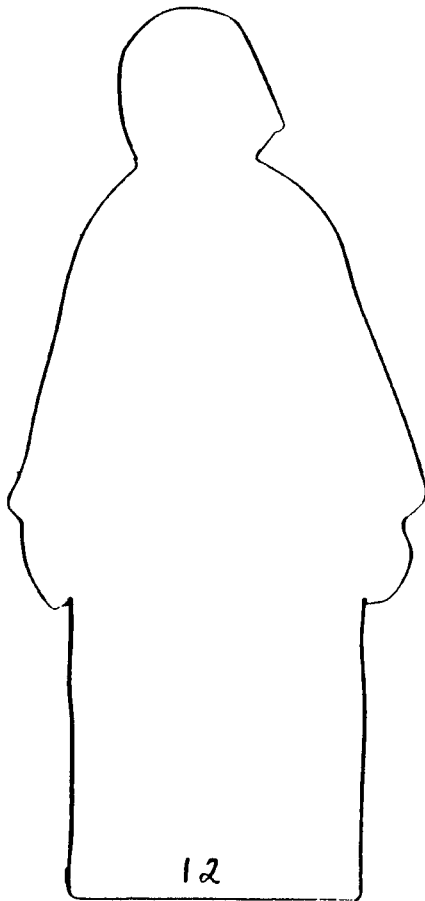
Note: After gluing the boat together (#34 & #35) drill a hole 15mm deep and insert a 10mm diameter dowel about 12cm long.

Lesson 5

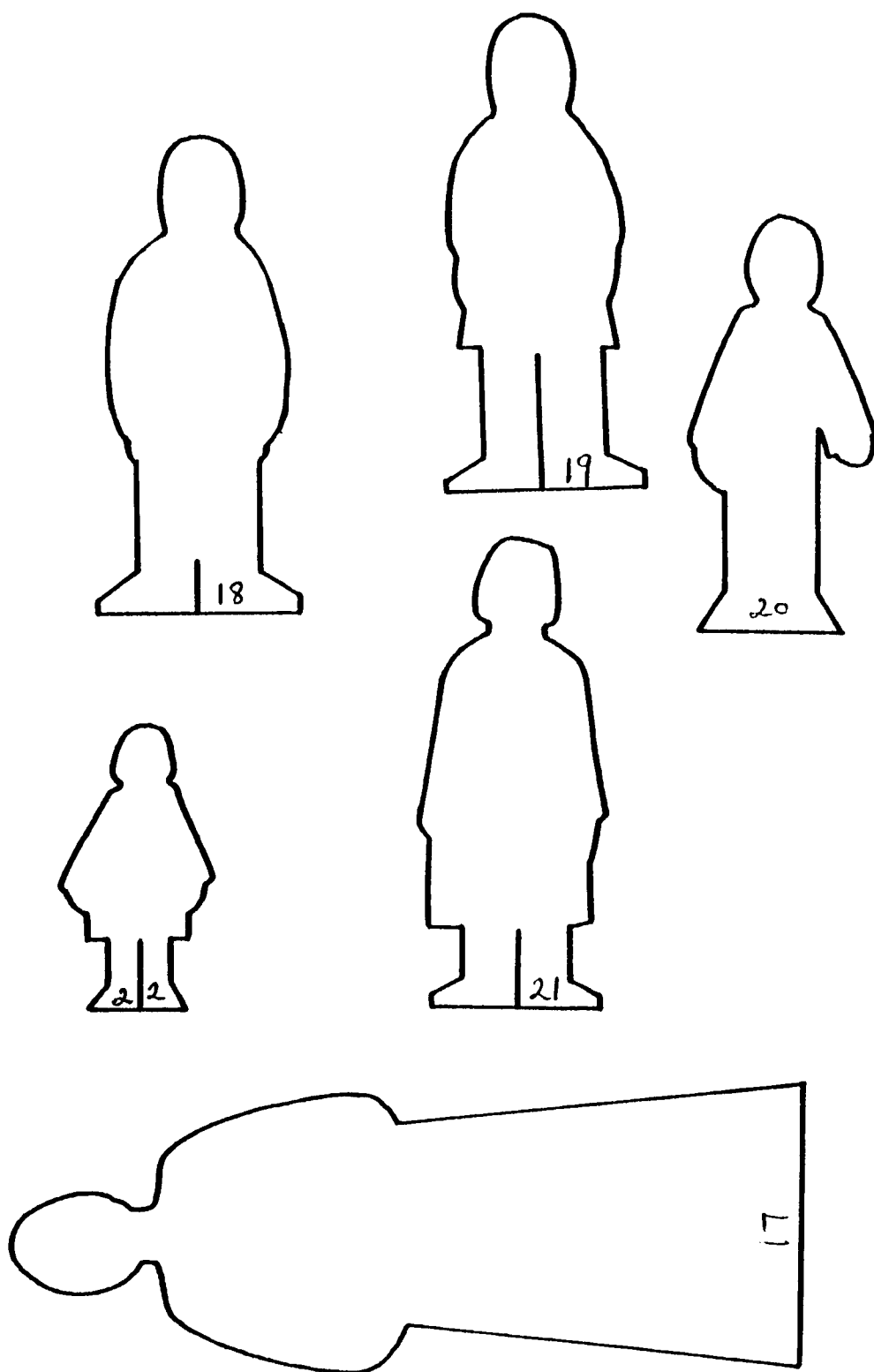
use the figures from Lesson 1

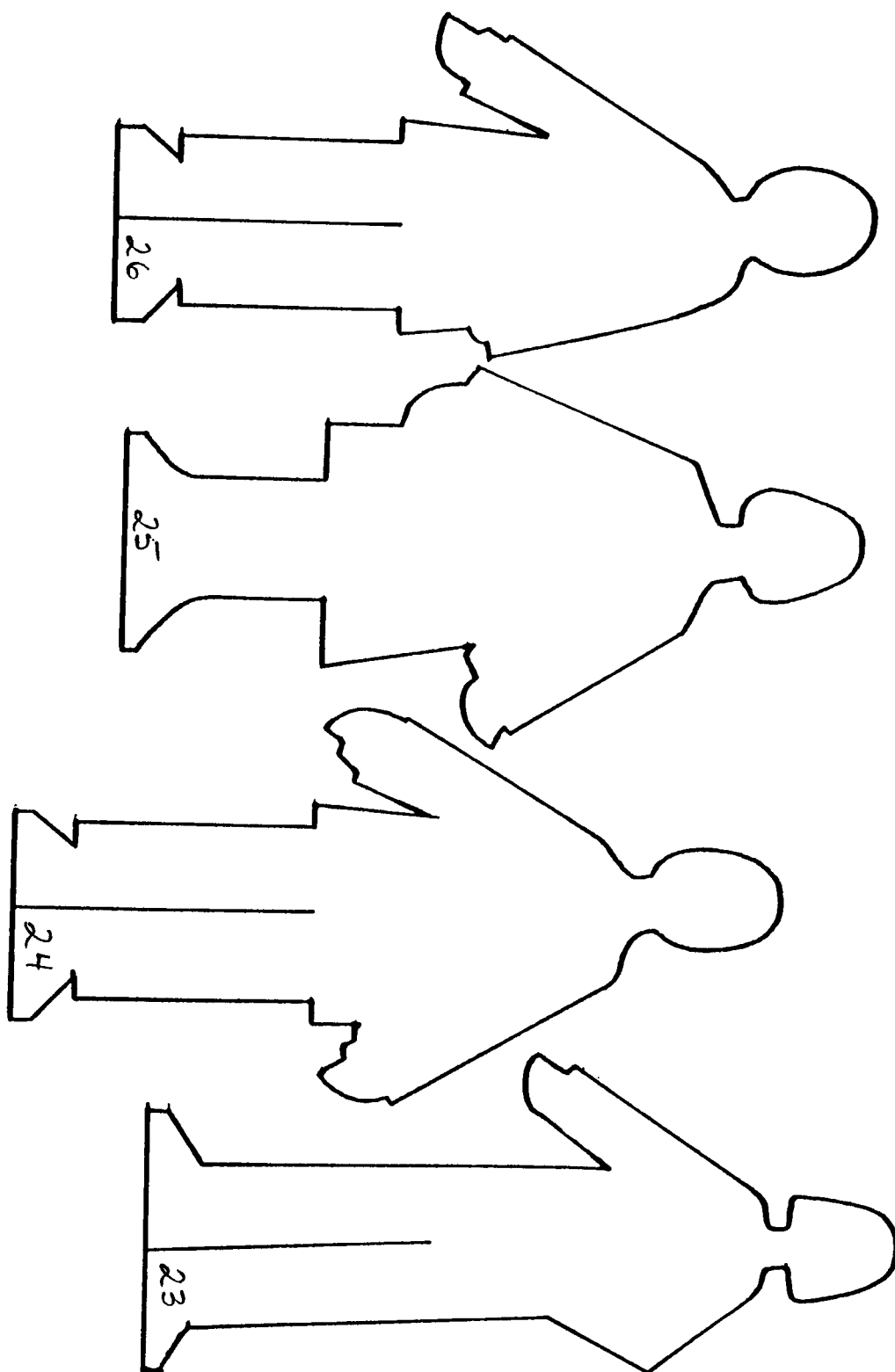


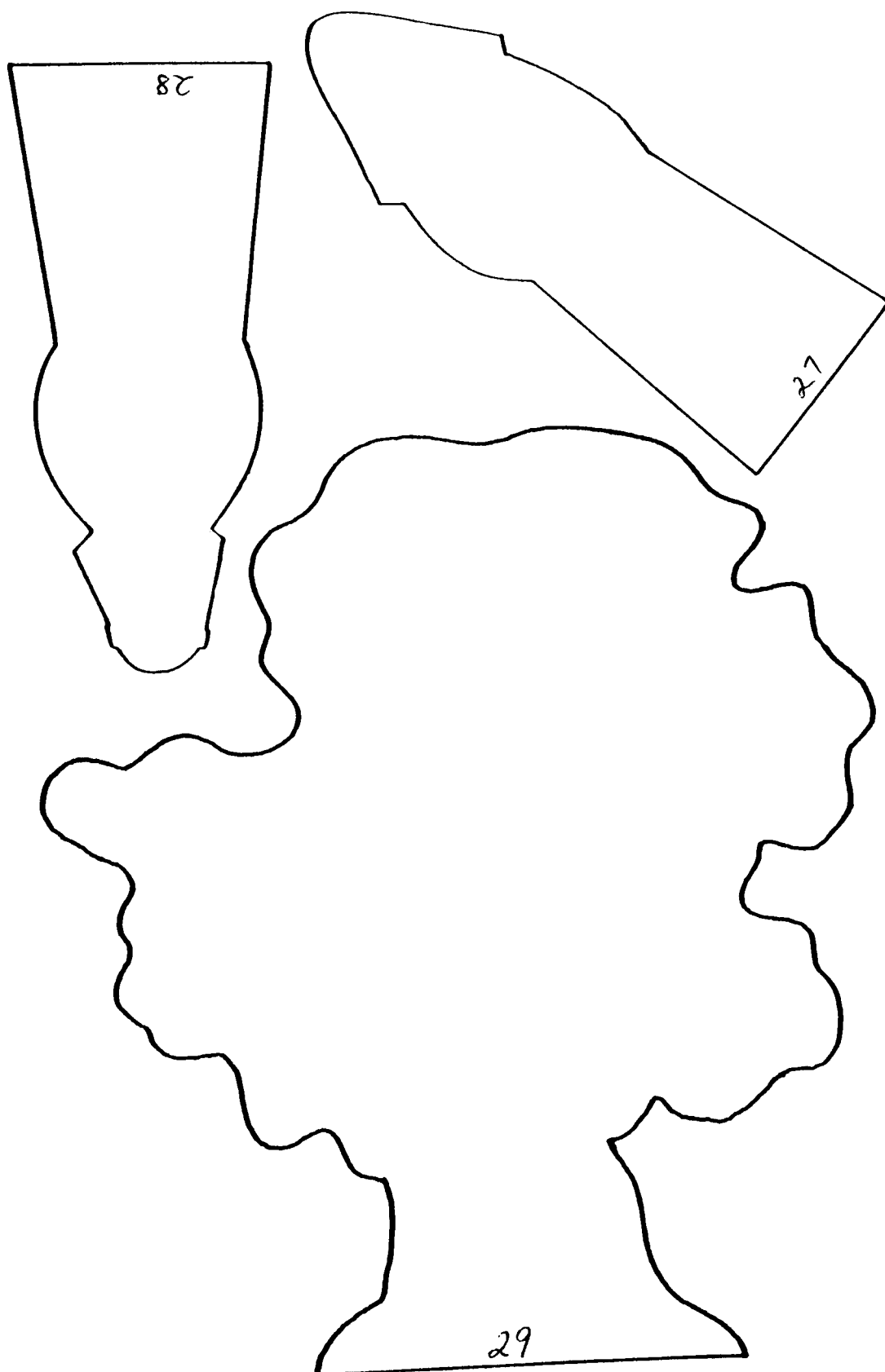


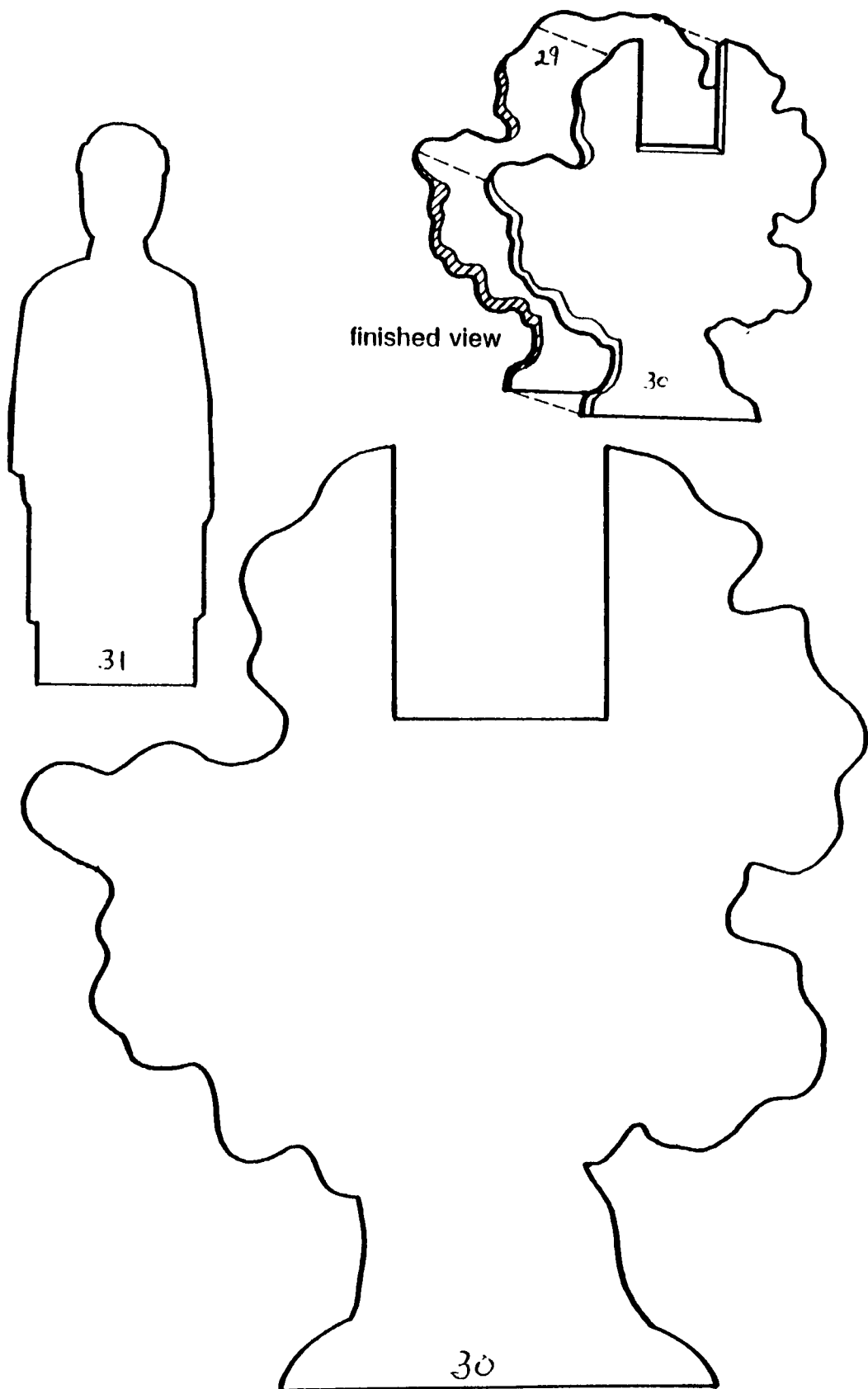


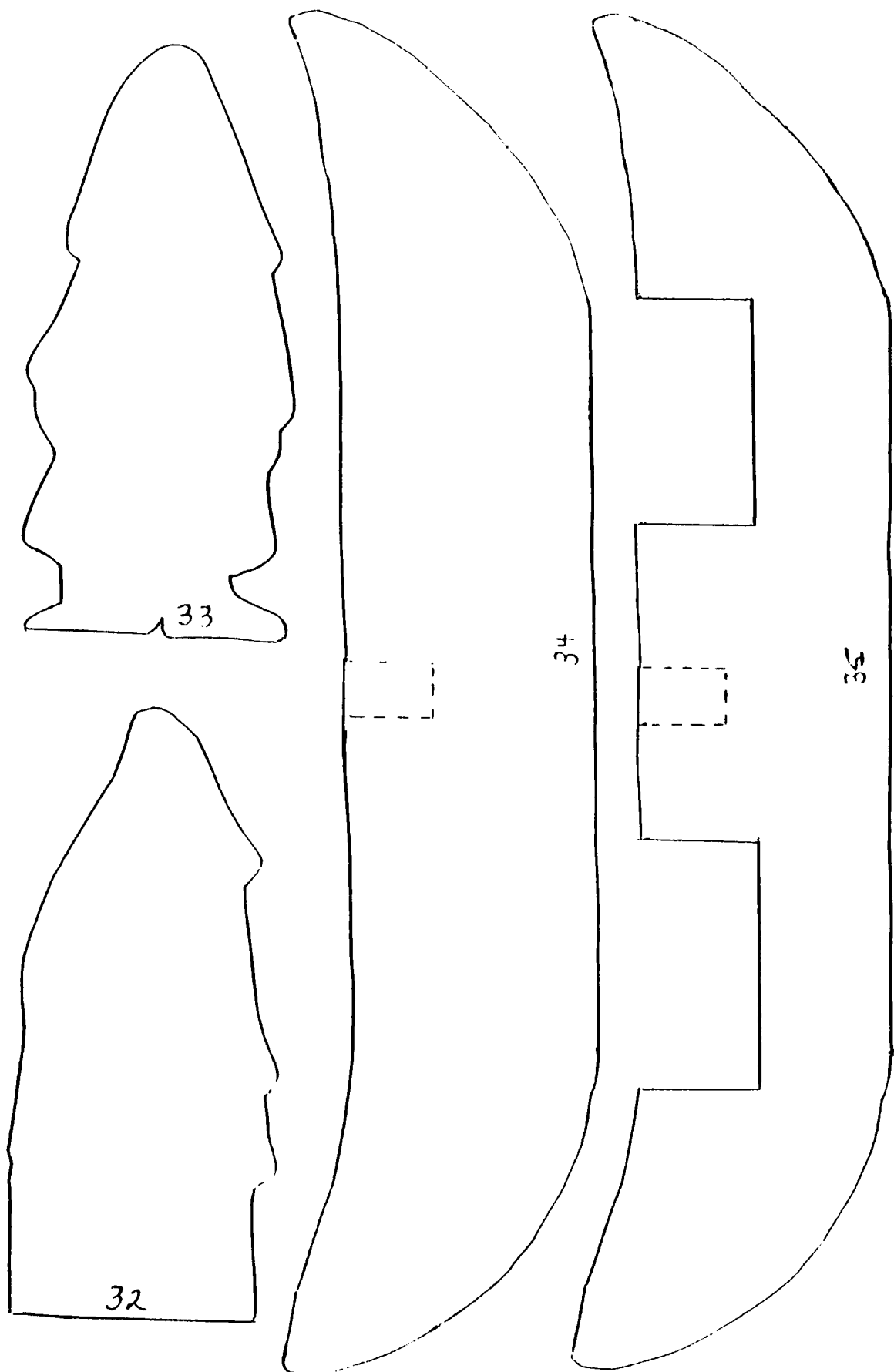
Good Shepherd











(Note: A large print Communion booklet can be made by copying this page and the next page on opposite sides of the same paper. Then do the same with the third and fourth pages. Tape a piece of paper across these instructions.)

The Pastor(s) will now take Communion, then the people in the congregation will come to the altar to be served Communion. Walk quietly to the altar when it is your turn. Kneel at the altar and talk to Jesus. Eat the bread and drink the juice when the Pastor tells you. Remember that Jesus died for you. Remember that he loves you and is present with you in a special way. Remember that Jesus is preparing a wonderful place for you in heaven. Thank Him.

The Benediction

May the peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord; and may the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, be yours now and forever. Amen.

The Sacrament of the Lord's Supper

NOTE: Sections with the bold (very dark) print should be read aloud with the congregation. I have put the words "Read aloud" in brackets beside those sections.

The Invitation

You who truly and earnestly repent of your sins, who live in love and peace with your neighbours, and who intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking in His holy ways, draw near with faith, and take this holy sacrament to your comfort; and, humbly kneeling, make your honest confession to Almighty God.

The General Confession (Read aloud)

Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, maker of all things, judge of all men, we confess that we have sinned, and we are deeply grieved as we remember the wickedness of our past lives. We have sinned against You, Your holiness, and Your love, and we deserve only Your indignation and anger.

We sincerely repent, and we are genuinely sorry for all wrongdoing and every failure to do the things we should. Our hearts are grieved, and we acknowledge that we are hopeless without Your grace.

Have mercy upon us.

Have mercy upon us, most merciful Father, for the sake of Your Son, our Saviour, Jesus Christ, who died for us.

Forgive us.

Cleanse us.

Give us strength to serve and please You in newness of life and to honour and praise Your name, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Prayer of Consecration of the Elements

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, who gave in love Your only Son, Jesus Christ, to suffer death upon the cross for our redemption, who by His sacrifice, offered once for all, did provide a full, perfect, and sufficient atonement for the sins of the whole world, we come now to Your table in obedience to Your Son, Jesus Christ, who in His holy gospel commanded us to continue a perpetual memory of His precious death until He comes again. Hear us, O merciful Father, we humbly ask, and grant that we receiving this bread and this cup, as He commanded and in memory of His passion and death, may partake of His most blessed body and blood.

In the night of His betrayal, Jesus took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to His disciples, saying, "Take, eat; this is My body which is given for you; do this in remembrance of Me."

In like manner, after supper He took the cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying, "Drink of this, all of you, for this is My blood of the New Testament, which is shed for you and for many, for the remission of sins; do this as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me." Amen.

The Prayer for Spiritual Communion

We do not come to this Your table, O merciful Lord, with self-confidence and pride, trusting in our own righteousness, but we trust in Your great and many mercies. We are not worthy to gather the crumbs from under Your table. But You, O Lord, are unchanging in Your mercy, and Your nature is love; grant us, therefore, God of mercy, God of grace, so to eat at this Your table that we may receive in spirit and in truth the body of Your dear Son, Jesus Christ, and the merits of His shed blood, so that we may live and grow in His likeness, and, being washed and cleansed through His most precious blood, we may evermore live in Him and He in us. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer (Read aloud)

Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.

The Affirmation of Faith

O Almighty God, our Heavenly Father, who with great mercy has promised forgiveness to all who turn to You with hearty repentance and true faith, have mercy upon us, pardon and deliver us from our sins, make us strong and faithful in all goodness, and bring us to everlasting life, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Collect (Read aloud)

Almighty God, unto whom all hearts are opened, all desires known, and from whom no secrets are hid: cleanse the thoughts of our hearts, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, that we may perfectly love You, and worthily magnify Your holy name, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

(Read aloud)

Holy, Holy, Holy,
Lord God of hosts!
Heaven and earth
are full of Thy glory.
Glory be to thee,
O Lord, most high. Amen.

The Sanctus

It is always right and proper, and our moral duty, that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, O Lord, holy Father, Almighty and Everlasting God.

Therefore, with angels and archangels, and with all the inhabitants of heaven, we honour and adore Your glorious name, evermore praising You and saying,

The Gloria Patri (Read aloud)

Glory be to the Father
And to the Son
And to the Holy Ghost:
As it was in the beginning,
Is now, and ever shall be,
World without end.
Amen. Amen.

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